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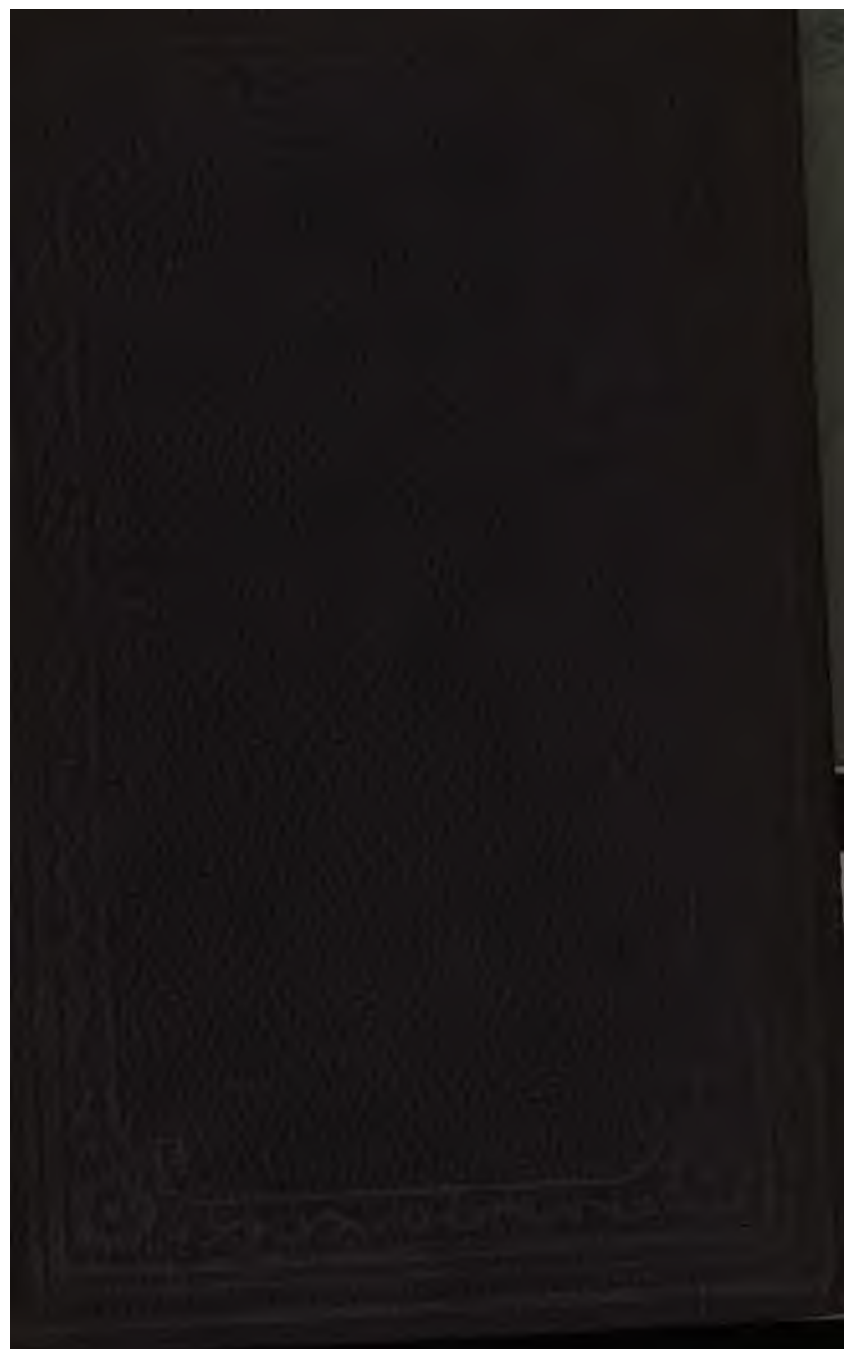
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# HOURS OF QUIET THOUGHT:

BY

THE REV. J. M. WHITELAW,

MINISTER OF ATHELSTANEFORD.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

THE REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN,

DUNDEE.

"Guard well thy thought:  
Our thoughts are heard in Heaven."

YOUNG.

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DEDICATION.

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TO

SIR DAVID KINLOCH, BARONET,

AND HIS DAUGHTERS

MRS. HARINGTON BALFOUR,

MISS KINLOCH,

AND

MISS HARRIET KINLOCH,

DISTINGUISHED NO LESS FOR THEIR VIRTUES

THAN THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS,

ESTEEMED WHEREVER THEY ARE KNOWN,

AND KNOWN WHEREVER THEY HEAR

THE CRY OF WANT,

THE MOAN OF SICKNESS,

OR THE SIGH OF SORROW,

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF RESPECT

By THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E .

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THE AUTHOR takes this opportunity of offering his thanks to Messrs. MOODIE and LOTHIAN, late Publishers in Edinburgh, for their permission to insert in this Volume an article which had become their property, and was favourably noticed at the time of its appearance by the Press.



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## INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

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THE interesting volume to which we have cheerfully agreed to write the following brief prefatory notice, is avowedly the production of Quiet Hours spent in a country Manse. It seems to us that this title is highly suggestive, and may be also eminently instructive in the present day. In the language of Wordsworth :—

“The world is too much with us.”

And wherever we find, even in the quaintest and most remote corner, quiet labour and thought going on in their still, but significant course, we have reason alike to be grateful for the present, and hopeful for the future. The lesson of quiet is, perhaps, not so prominently taught us either in the aspects of the universe, or of human society, as is that of everlasting motion and restless progress. In one point of view, and that



certainly not the shallowest—Being itself appears a stream, a storm—a stream ever flowing and changing as it flows; a storm ever bowing and assuming new shapes and phases as it hurries on. Suns in reality are as fleeting as meteors; mountains as clouds; our own bodies as yonder rivulet, in which we see their swimming shadows. Lucretius and his Epicurean school maintain that the universe was made by a dance of atoms; but in reality it is a dance of atoms, and that dance is, so far as we at present can assert, everlasting. Orion is dancing up there in the midnight as really as the Aurora Borealis. The Milky Way is leading a solemn dance upon the floor of night, and even our own frame, solid and changeless as it may seem, in the course of each seven years makes out a measure of its own, and dances away every particle of its old matter. Properly speaking, nothing in the universe is permanent except Law, Life, and Love; and these together, constitute the awful and unchangeable Trinal Unity, which we sum up in God, who is without variableness and shadow of turning.

And yet, amid this ceaseless and silent change,

in the river of which there is in reality not one moment's rest, there occur, what we may call, at least in the Poet's language, "Metaphors of peace," images, if not eddies of quietude, which convey their own impressive lesson to the thoughtful mind. How many things exist, of which, you may say with another favourite bard, that

"In their very motion there is rest"

The stream, slipping dreamily below the copse wood, the lake of summer lazily moving to the languid breeze, the moonbeams creeping like guilty things from bough to bough in the forest, and from bank to brae, and hill to hill in the landscape! Night herself, as contrasted with day, is one vast emblem of peace, with her silent stars, and the hush which comes down like the faintest of whispers over all the shaded expanse, both of earth and Heaven. The late Professor Nichol, while describing a planet placed between two suns, the one rising as the other sets, and the inhabitants in which must thus be entirely insulated from the universe, and have no

conception of its vastitude and teeming worlds, finely remarks :—" Who, after all, would grieve, although there be some enclosed spots—quietudes in creation—which will be unexplored, unpenetrated, for ever? who, that has felt the soft healing of evening can regret that even in the intellectual world, there are regions into which faintness and weariness may sometimes flee, and take shelter and repose, away from the scorch and glare of oppressive light? Sweet and inviting mysteries, among whose gentle shadows hope and fear, and all unnamed yearnings, tremblingly advance, and find or fashion for themselves images of purity, convictions of immortality, vistas of a life to come, through which the soul may wander freer and greater than now, having obtained the privilege by virtue." One of the finest thoughts in that wonderful, but unequal poem, " The Course of Time," is where the poet speaks of wastes and wildernesses existing in Heaven, to which the saints, as voluntary hermits, can at times retire, to chew, so to speak, the cud of their happiness ; to roll it in secret as a sweet morsel under their tongues, even as on earth.

we find it is a relief to leave even scenes of great and joyous excitement, for solitude, and thus do not lose or lessen, but redouble and intensify the delight. If there be no absolute rest, in a revolving and on rushing creation, where the very "fixed stars are in motion," there must be, and there is a *quasi* quiet; a certain comparative tranquillity, without which its grand plans would not be so fully accomplished, and its great lessons not so thoroughly taught.

But if the universe be a "fire, unfolding itself," surely society in all its branches has become a fierce fever, its symptoms, indeed, less diversified, but all as swiftly succeeding each other as the hues do upon the dying dolphin. We find this restlessness characterizing all classes and kindreds of men, and working in all the agencies of existence. The motion of the human family was once a walk; it is now a race, a rapid, urgent, kindling race. It is as if men were afraid that ere they gained their object, the curtain would drop, and darkness be the burier of the dead. And with this swift and whirling progress the powers of Nature seem to correspond.

The earth is pouring out, as if in haste, her most hidden stores of treasure. The telegraph, dropped into the deep, is rehearsing the awful words:—"There shall be no more sea." Electricity, magnetism, and even gunnery, are annihilating space; the eye of the rifle, like that of the basilisk, is destroying at fabulous distances; men are fighting the battles of the giants over again; rocks and mountains are now, through the force of our artillery, meeting each in mid-air, and crushing opponents in myriads ere they are themselves seen. Enterprise has put on eagles' pinions, and is finding the loftiest hills little, and the widest deserts narrow in its unwearied and resistless way; and while the solitudes of the world are thus partaking in the age's restless and noisy excitement, need we wonder, though its great cities have become preternaturally busy, although men be living, moving, eating, drinking, and dying at railway speed—though they have hardly leisure to eat their meals, or to bury their dead—though night is turned into day, and many find scarcely time to shuffle off their mortal coil, and are less afraid of death than of

the delay of business, which such an untoward event would cause. Even the researches of our time are pursued upon the wing; most visits are now "flying visits;" letters have dwindled into notes. Puck, putting a girdle round the globe in forty minutes, has become the pattern for our tourists. Courtships are much less prolix than in good old Jacob's days; in reading we resemble the dogs of Egypt, who sip the stream as they run, for fear of the crocodiles; every pen is now a *currens calamus*, and if knowledge is not "greatly increased," it is not for the want of many "running to and fro." There are millions who have no time to read anything but the newspapers, and whose knowledge even of their beloved Dailies is rather superficial; our very language is getting clipped, curtailed, fore-shortened, by the invasions of laconic slang. We have no time to speak so correctly or volubly as our fathers; and no time to think at all. The religion of many Christians lies in attending church once a day, and reading a few pages of "Good Words" on the Sabbath evening; and many of the sceptics, on the other hand,

collect all their doubts from a casual glance at the "National Reformer" or the "Westminster Review." Many students, we believe, can coincide with our own experience. We remember, ere penny papers were, that we were in the habit of spending an hour every morning at the breakfast table—and it was the most delightful hour of our day—in carrying on the thoughtful perusal of some profound and suggestive author—Brown's Philosophy, or Fichte's noble speculations. But now we find four or five Dailies on our table instead, and at these we must glance, and by the time this is done our tea and toast are consumed, our breakfast hour is over, and we must go away to our public or literary work.

In such a state of things, how urgent is the demand for a little rest amidst the turmoil; for a few "quiet" amidst so many "noisy" hours. And how thankful we should be that still there do exist some calm nooks which are not so much affected as those exposed regions by the agitation and undue excitement of the age. Such are our Universities, which may be compared to those deep forest shades which keep the dew of

the morning unmelted, while that on the hills and open plains is dried, which conserve much of the genuine results and spirit of the past, while they do not, or ought not to set themselves in opposition to the broader enquiries, and bolder generalizations of the present. Such may be, even yet, some of the better of the Monasteries, in less favoured lands than ours, where, haply still, burn some sparks of the spirit which kindled the great soul of an Abelard. And such are, we hesitate not to say, many of our country Manses, both in England and Scotland, where a race of men, and of various denominations, not certainly encumbered with wealth, although in circumstances which imply considerable comfort, and confer considerable leisure, spend that sternly bought leisure in pursuing theological or literary studies, and who, ever and anon, produce works now of science, now of fiction, now of poetry, and now of religious enquiry, which the world is not slow to recognise, and is not willing to let die. From such Manses, to confine our thoughts at present to Scotland, have proceeded the Grave of Blair, the Douglas of Home, the Histories of Robertson



and Henry, the Morning and the Evening Sacrifice of Wright, the Dictionary of Jameson, the early works of Chalmers, not to name a hundred other productions of kindred character and excellence. Long may the Manses of Scotland repay, as it were, the beauties of their position beside our clear waters, green meadows, lovely streams, or dark and sounding woods, by continuing to send forth similar masterpieces of intellect and genius!

From a Scottish Manse, as hinted before, comes out this unpretending volume which is now in the reader's hands. It is not the part of the Prefacer, here, to criticize minutely, but simply and generally to recommend it. It is the production of one, who certainly does no dishonour to the parish where Robert Blair poured forth his vigorous numbers on one of the saddest, yet most attractive of themes. It is the work of a thoughtful, accomplished, well-read, pious, and earnest man. Where many papers are excellent, I would mention two as dearer, and perhaps abler than most of the rest, namely: "The Burial of Christ," and the "Spiritual Function of Nature."

The latter must be specially prized by those who rejoice to find literature, nature, and a mild and beautiful form of faith, blended together like a bunch of flowers of various hues, or like one of those clusters in the heavens, where a blue, a red, and a yellow star, combine to form one chaste, yet most gorgeous whole.

GEORGE GILFILLAN,

Dundee, November, 1864.



[ I. ]

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING FOR THAT  
SOLEMN AND DECISIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE  
DIVINE BEING WHICH AWAITS US AT DEATH.

---

Little indeed does it concern us in this our mortal stage to inquire whence the Spirit hath come; but of what infinite concern is the consideration whither it is going. Surely such consideration demands the study of a life.—SOUTHEY.

It is an equally striking and significant fact in the history of our nature, that man prepares for every kind of interview but that he will have one day with his Maker. The man of business prepares for an interview with the legal adviser on whose skill he relies for being extricated from the embarrassing circumstances in which he has

been placed. The courtier prepares for an interview with his sovereign, and endeavours to meet him with the blandest smiles, and softest accents. The trembling culprit prepares for his interview with his Judge, and does all that his limited means will allow to meet him under the most favourable circumstances. The votary of fashion prepares for meeting the gay assembly, and spends hour after hour before the flattering mirror in arranging the costume which shall set off the symmetry of her form to the greatest advantage, and concentrate the gaze of the greatest number of admirers. The young man prepares for the profession by means of which he hopes to earn his future livelihood. If that profession be medicine, he will walk the rounds of the hospital, he will attend to the instructions of its authorized teachers, he will visit the couches of the diseased and dying, he will sit over the mouldering corpse, and with his scalpel, or lancet, endeavour to trace the mysterious channels which lead to the seat of life, he will pore over the writings of distinguished authors, he will visit the schools of medicine in

distant countries, he will even go to the field of battle that he may see suffering and disease in their most revolting forms ; he will do all this, and sometimes more than this, to prepare himself for discharging intelligently and skilfully the duties of the important and arduous profession to which he means to devote his life. There is the same preparation made for the future in every other department of human labour. The young man who hopes to occupy one day a distinguished place in the courts of law prepares for the struggle he knows he will have to encounter in forcing his way upwards through the crowd of competitors who stand ready to enter the lists with him. With this view he makes himself acquainted with the principles and practice of jurisprudence. He reads those authors who have written with the greatest perspicuity on the subject. He pores over ponderous and musty volumes. He attends the courts of justice. He listens to the most brilliant and successful pleaders, and all this he does with the view of preparing himself for the performance of the duties, which, if he live, he expects will devolve

on him. It is the same with men in every other department of human exertion. The mariner prepares for meeting with adverse winds, cross currents, and sunken reefs, and before leaving the safe and secluded harbour sees well to it that his vessel is rendered in all respects fit for the dangers she may have to encounter, whether her course may lie amid the frozen seas of northern regions or the sunny waters of the south. For business of every kind in this world man prepares himself. There is scarcely anything of importance he will attempt without preparation. He prepares for the distant voyage, he prepares for the party of pleasure, he prepares for the political meeting, he prepares for the festive assembly, he prepares for the baptismal rite, he prepares for the marriage festival, he prepares for the funeral procession, he prepares for the field of battle, he prepares for a day of pleasure, and yet, while making active and earnest preparations for these things, leaves neglected that which should occupy all his thoughts and engross all his efforts—his preparation for meeting with His Maker.

There are, if we mistake not, three prevailing

errors on the subject of preparation for meeting with God.

The first is, that God is a Being of such *boundless mercy that no particular or specific kind of preparation is required for meeting Him.*

There are multitudes who indulge this error. They think that because God is merciful, because they have heard He is slow to anger, because His love to sinners was so great, that he gave up his Son to die for them, that therefore no particular kind of preparation is necessary for meeting Him. They would prepare to meet Him, did they believe that He was what they sometimes hear him represented to be, a severe, stern, and inexorable Being. They would prepare to meet Him if they could conceive for a moment that he would call such frail and erring creatures as they are to a strict account. They would prepare to meet Him if they could only believe that He was as stern and awful a Being as they sometimes hear he is. They cannot, however, credit these views of the character of the Divine Being. They love to contemplate Him, under the aspect of a kind, indulgent Father,



and not under that of a stern and impartial Judge. The name of the Divine Being with them is only an equivalent for kindness, benignity, compassion. They strip his character of all that is stern and severe, they blend together in their imagination all that is soft, amiable, and endearing in human character, and sublimating these features to the highest possible degree of expansion, suppose them to exist in the divine nature, in the utmost degree of plenitude and perfection. The Being, however, whom such persons clothe with the attributes of God, is totally different from Him whom Christianity reveals. Were God such a Being, there would certainly be little need for preparing to meet Him. We might live very much as we pleased. We might be virtuous or vicious as we found it convenient. It would make little matter how we lived, inasmuch as we were to meet at last One too great to contend with such frail creatures as we are, and too merciful to punish. The Being, however, whom the Bible tells us we are to meet after death, is in all respects different from this imaginary deity.

Not more different is the soft, deep blue of a summer's sky from the dark, sombre colours of a winter one—not greater is the difference between the appearance of the landscape lit up with the summer sun, covered with flowers, and breathing fragrance, and the same landscape when, whitened with snow, it lies bleak and cold—than is the difference between that Being these persons call God, and expect to meet, and the Being the Bible calls God, and tells us we shall meet. If the God we were to meet was just what these persons suppose He is, there would be as little need of preparation for meeting Him, as there is need on the part of a child for meeting the father whom he loves. The God, however, whom we are to meet is in all respects different. He is a God who hates iniquity. He is a God who will by no means clear the guilty, and those therefore who make no specific preparation for meeting Him, commit a mistake as great as that which a criminal, charged with a capital offence, would commit, who because he had heard, or dreamed, or imagined that the judge before whom he was to stand was kind and indulgent in the bosom

of his own family, counted on an acquittal, and made no preparation for meeting him on the day of trial.

II. Another error which exists on this subject is that of supposing that *because Christ has died for us, and by His death made an atonement for sin, therefore no preparation is necessary on our part for meeting with the Divine Being.*

While there are multitudes who make no preparation for meeting with God, because they think that He is too merciful to punish them, there are probably as many who think that because Christ has died for them, no kind of preparation on their part is necessary. It is true that Christ has died. His death, however, was never intended to render personal preparation on our part unnecessary. We are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We are to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. To suppose that because Christ has died for us, therefore no preparation on our part is necessary, is to indulge an error as great as would be that of the man who refused to co-operate with his physician in the application of the means necessary

for the restoration of health. The science and the skill of the ablest physician in the world will not, and cannot, render co-operation on the part of the patient unnecessary. It is necessary that he work together with the physician, if he would have restored to him the health he has lost. He must take the medicine he prescribes, he must abstain from all he prohibits, he must attend to the regimen he orders. It is by actively co-operating with him that he expects to be cured. He does not expect to be cured against his will. He does not expect to be cured in the same way that a piece of mechanism is repaired when it goes wrong, by merely lying passive in the hands of the workman. A man who supposes that his physician would do all for him, and that he need do nothing for himself, would commit a fatal mistake. The physician has his part to perform and the patient has his, and it is only by active co-operation that the sick man will leave that bed of agony on which he lies, and that the hectic flush will leave his cheek, and that life, which now trembles in the balance, will be prolonged. In like manner the atonement which Christ has made for the

sinner meeting God, does not and cannot exempt him from the necessity of preparing to the utmost of his power. Christ has done his part and the sinner must do his, and those who think that because Christ has done His, no preparation on their part is necessary, are guilty of as great an error as the sick or dying man would be guilty of who, because the physician had simply prescribed, thought that the prescription was enough, and that without any effort on their part the mystic characters in which it was written would effect a cure.

III. A third mistake which prevails on this subject is that *repentance on a death-bed will be a sufficient preparation for meeting God*. There are multitudes who, while convinced that preparation of some kind is necessary for meeting with their Maker, are delaying that preparation in the hope they will have sufficient time in the last hours of life. Such persons do not deny that preparation is necessary. They are convinced that in their present state they are unfit to meet God. They are too much occupied, however, with the business or the cares or the pleasures of life to find the time

which is necessary to enter on what they consider a somewhat arduous and irksome work. "As soon as I get released from the trammels of business, and enjoy freedom from care," says one, "I shall set about this work of preparing to meet God. It is a work which demands leisure; and harassed as I am with cares, it is utterly impossible for me to apply myself to the subject with the earnestness and application its importance deserves." "When I shall have partaken a little more largely of the pleasures of the world," says another, "mixed a little more in its gay assemblies, seen a little more of its society, I shall turn my back upon it for ever, immure myself in solitude, and begin in right earnest to prepare myself for meeting that Great Being with whom I must soon come into contact." "I shall have time enough on a death-bed," says a third, "to prepare to meet God. The close of life will afford that leisure which is required for entering on so serious a work, and I shall and must do then what I would but cannot do now." Were these the errors of a few, they would deserve less attention. There are multitudes, however,

who indulge them. The man of business, who prepares for weeks and months beforehand to meet his angry creditors, who looks over his books by day and by night to see that he has made no mistakes, and who when he finds one can take neither food nor rest until it is rectified, that man hopes in a few brief hurried seconds to complete his preparation for meeting his Maker. The votary of fashion, who spends weeks in preparing for the brilliant assembly, and with the view of being thoroughly prepared will try the effect of different colours and kinds of costume, expects to be able to prepare for meeting God during the few hurried hours during which disease is loosening the chords of life. What mistake can be greater than this? To hope to be able to do in a moment what should occupy a life,—to seek to patch up during the few short and often agonized hours which precede dissolution our peace with our Maker. Can any infatuation be greater? There is none we may rest assured, even in that dwelling where insanity puts on such strange forms, and plays such strange freaks, even equal to it. We pity the madness of the

maniac when we see him with a reed in his hand and a crown of straw on his head, persist in saying he is a King. We blush for the weakness of our nature when we see the maiden who was once the pride of the village, and a living impersonation of all that was beautiful in form and lovely in virtue, tearing in her frenzy her dishevelled hair, and muttering in her agony, the wildest and most incoherent cries. And yet what form of insanity can exceed that which we see practised every day, the insanity of supposing that that can be accomplished on a death-bed, and in a few hurried moments, which is enough and more than enough to occupy the whole of life from its commencement to its close? Any man who persuaded himself he could master the science of astronomy in an hour would, it will be admitted, be guilty of an act of gross self-delusion, but the man who supposes he will have time to prepare to meet God on a death-bed and at the close of life commits a still greater, inasmuch as the truths of that science, however abstract, might be more easily mastered within such a brief period than habits, tastes, and feelings, which have been the growth of years, be



uprooted during the few hurried moments which are often allotted to man at the close of existence.\*

Let us now consider *why* we should prepare for this great interview. There are various reasons which might be assigned. Amongst many which might be adduced we should prepare because we shall meet a Being then we never met before, and whose *nature is entirely different* from that of all with whom we have ever been in contact. There is something solemn in the thought of meeting even a finite being whose nature is different from our own. So long as we meet with those whose nature is the same as our own we have no fear, or at least think we have reason for none. A similarity of nature forms a ground of confidence even between those who have never met before. The traveller in the desert approaches at night-fall from this feeling with confidence the distant tent from which he sees the glimmering light. He knows that he will meet there those who may differ from him, perhaps in language, in costume, in colour, in creed, but who have a nature the same as his own, and that knowledge

\* See note A.

gives him confidence, and he draws near to it persuaded that his look of distress and his air of entreaty will awaken in the hearts of the children of the desert the same emotions which in similar circumstances would be awakened in his own. With what different emotions, however, would he approach that tent, if, instead of being confronted by men of like passions with himself, it was inhabited by beings possessing a different organization, and feelings from his own! Were that tent the abode of some spirit of light, or did some foul fiend from the nether world lodge in it, how differently would he draw near to it! And why would he have such confidence in the one case, and such dread in the other? His dread would arise from the thought of meeting what he had never met before, and that which renders it so solemn a thing to meet with God, is that we shall then meet One we have never met before, and see for the first time a Being whose nature is now shrouded in deep and awful mystery.

II. We should prepare because we shall come into *direct and personal contact* with this Great Being. If there was to be any one with us at the

time of our interview with God it would lessen the feeling of dread. A friend with us we know lessens in the hour of danger our alarm. It is different, however, when we are alone. To be alone in the heart of a great city at the hour of midnight, or alone on the summit of a mountain, or alone on the shores of the ocean, or alone even in our own dwelling, when all are sunk in slumber, and no sound is heard but that of the wandering nightwind or the bird of prey, to be alone in any of these situations is felt to be oppressive, and a feeling of sadness and fear steals over the heart which makes us wish we had some magic wand which would break the spell of solitude and cause living congenial forms to spring up around us. If it be so solemn to be alone in the great city, in the desert, on the shore, on the mountain summit, or in our own dwelling, when those we love no longer converse with us, what must it be to be alone with God? It would be a solemn thing to be alone with one of those spirits who stand before the throne. Did we know that such a being would come down to us when we were sunk in slumber, that he would appear to us as he ap-

peared to the Hebrew Emir, that we should see him, that we should hear him, there are few who would not look forward to the time when the celestial visitant was to appear with trepidation and awe. We should count the circling hours as they revolved. We should interpret every sound we heard into an announcement of his approach. And when at last the hour came round when we should be brought into contact with this radiant being, with his countenance lit up with immortal lustre, and his raiment glittering with celestial light, how deep would be the emotions of awe which would overwhelm us ! But what is it to meet with such a being as we have supposed, or even a multitude of such beings, to meeting with the Great Unseen ! Were we to meet with the most exalted of all created beings, we should meet, it is true, a being differing in many respects from any of those we had ever seen before. When we meet, however, with God, we shall meet a Being totally and entirely different in all respects from any one we have either seen or conceived of in life, and meet Him, there is every reason to believe, *alone*.

III. We should prepare for this interview, because we shall meet Him as our *final and impartial Judge*.

It sometimes happens, even in this world, that men meet each other in very different characters, and bearing to each other very different relations from those they sustained when they parted. A son, for example, is guilty of an offence which brings discredit on himself, and dishonour on his family. Previous to the perpetration of the offence, the utmost cordiality of feeling existed between the father of that family and that son. In what a different aspect does that father appear to that son from the moment he committed that offence. He is still his father, but in addition to bearing the relation of a father, he bears to him the new relation of a judge, and the offence of which he is guilty has armed him with a power which slumbered before, and which makes that child see clouds of displeasure hanging over his brow, and the fires of vengeance kindling in his eye. The son meets that father under a new character, and in a different relation from that in which he ever met him before; and that which

makes it so solemn a thing for us to meet God is that we shall meet Him under a different character and relation from that in which we ever met him before. Now we meet God as a father, we meet Him as a friend, we meet Him as a benefactor. When we meet Him, however, as we are to do at last, we shall meet Him as a Judge, and in this aspect He will pronounce a sentence which shall consign us either to inconceivable happiness or to endless woe.

But let us now consider *how* should we prepare for this interview?

I. We should prepare for this *interview* with God by making ourselves *personally* acquainted with Him.

“*Acquaint* thyself with God,” says Job, “and be at peace;” and though He is in Heaven, and we are on earth, we may begin an acquaintance with Him here.

It is not necessary even in the case of human acquaintanceship that there should be proximity or personal contact on the part of those cultivating it. Instances have occurred of individuals

who have never seen each other on earth, who have been separated by the wide ocean, and impassable deserts, cherishing for each other a deep, warm, and lasting affection. Let us cultivate an acquaintance with God, and it will prepare us for meeting Him, and when we meet we shall meet as those who have known each other and not as strangers.

II. We should prepare for this interview by exercising a *deep, heart-felt, and habitual* repentance, on account of our many sins and short-comings.

Repentance is not so much an act as a *habit*. We must not suppose that we have repented or ever can repent enough. A child who has broken by his misconduct a father's heart, would not think one act of repentance enough. That child if he is truly penitent will repent, to the close of his life, over the misconduct which has pierced a parent's heart. He will live and die a penitent, and thus if we would prepare to meet God we must repent every day and hour of the sins by which we have dishonoured Him. It is only such a deep, heart-felt, *habitual* repen-

tance which will prepare us for meeting Him with confidence.

III. We should prepare for this interview by seeking from Him *that change of heart* without which we can never meet Him in peace. Such a change we require. We cannot look at hearts so cold, carnal, selfish, worldly, without feeling that they need to be renewed, and that without renewal we are unfit to meet our Maker. How necessary would it be for a child who had cherished feelings of enmity towards a parent to seek that those feelings should be removed before he met him! A child having such feelings could have no pleasure in the society and presence of a parent, and as little pleasure would a parent have in the presence of such a child. Let us seek therefore an entire change of heart. Let us seek that the carnal mind which is at enmity against God be taken away, that God would create a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within us. The possession of such a spirit will alone prepare us for meeting Him with acceptance.

IV. We should prepare for this interview by



seeking a more *active and appropriate faith* in the merits of the Saviour.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, and the more vigorous and appropriating our faith the more we shall be prepared to meet Him. It is only such a faith which will enable us to meet *Him* in peace. "Give me," said an apostle of infidelity, "more laudanum, that I may fall asleep and not think of what is coming." "I know," said one who had lived a life of faith, "in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to him against that day."

There is but one question which remains to be settled, and that is, *When should we begin* to prepare to meet God? and we shall answer that by asking another—When should a sick man begin to take the medicine prescribed by the physician? When should a man in danger of being drowned grasp the rope that is thrown to him? When should a man on board of a ship on fire make his escape from it? When should a man in danger of being seized by his creditors take legal advice? It will be admitted that in all these cases the

different individuals should do what they intend to do immediately, and if promptitude in their case be necessary, are not the reasons inconceivably stronger why we should begin *immediately* to prepare to meet God? Only suppose that the man on board of a burning vessel, when urged to leave it, requested he might be allowed to remain a little longer; or that the dying man when urged to take the medicine which might ward off the stroke of death replied, "I will take it to-morrow when the disease has become more firmly seated, and the cold hand of death is more sensibly upon me." Do we not see that each of these men would act a most irrational and infatuated part? Infatuated, however, as their conduct would be, it will bear no comparison with our own. For what is the fire which burns the flaming vessel to the water's edge until nothing more is left of what walked on the waters like a thing of life, but the bare and blackened hulk; what is it compared with that fire of divine wrath which will burn on for ever, and which the tears of remorse, so far from helping to quench, shall only render fiercer and more intractable? And what is the disease which

will destroy the body but a light and harmless thing compared with those plagues which will be rained down in one wide and wasting tempest on the soul? Such a doom we provoke if we neglect to prepare to meet God. It had been better we had died in childhood. It had been better we had been born in a heathen land. It had been better we had never existed, for if we meet God without having sought and acquired that preparation of heart which is necessary, we shall meet Him, not as a reconciled Father, but as a stern and impartial Judge.

[ II. ]

ON THE INFLUENCE WHICH THE APPEARANCE OF  
A MESSENGER FROM THE DEAD WOULD HAVE ON  
THE MIND OF A RELIGIOUS INQUIRER.

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“ Like one that on a lonesome road,  
Doth walk in fear and dread,  
And having once turn'd round, walks on,  
And turns no more his head—  
Because he knows a frightful fiend,  
Doth close behind him tread.”

CHARLES LAMB.

AN impression prevails amongst a considerable number of people that could they but have an opportunity of conversing with a messenger from the dead, and hearing his report as to what he had seen and heard in the invisible world, they would be so impressed by his statements that they would no longer be apathetic or unconcerned, but become at once earnest and decided on the subject

of religion. This was the belief of the Jews, who said, "Shew us a *sign* from heaven, and we will believe," and it is the belief of not a few of those who are unmoved by the ordinary means of grace, that would the Divine Being but employ some extraordinary and supernatural means—could they but hear some voice like that which is said to have been heard in the recesses of the temple at Jerusalem, previous to its destruction, or that which Peter heard come out of the "excellent glory;" or, could they but see some spectral form, such as that which appeared to Job, which made his blood to grow cold, and his hair to stand on an end; or could one whom they had known, or with whom they were familiar, but rise from the dead, and tell them all he had seen and heard in the world of which he had been an inhabitant, they would be far more likely to be convinced by extraordinary means of this kind, than they are by those ordinary means which God in His wisdom has seen fit to employ, and under which they have remained so long unimpressed. And yet, nothing is more certain, than that if the ordinary means which are

employed, to bring men to repentance, do not avail, no extraordinary means would have any effect, and that even were a spirit to be permitted to ascend from Hell, and tell us about its horrors, or descend from Heaven, and expatiate on its glories, the impression made upon the mind would be as faint as that made by the dream in which we imagine we see hideous forms, or hear terrific voices, and the influence of which gradually subsides when day sets in with its gladdening light and cheerful sounds.

In order that we may deepen in our minds a conviction of this solemn truth, let it be observed that were God to permit a messenger to manifest himself to us from the invisible state in a palpable form, or converse with us in an audible voice, we should, in all probability, be so *appalled by his appearance*, as to be utterly incapable of giving that calm and dispassionate attention to his message which its importance would demand. It is only necessary to recal to recollection the feelings of consternation which the appearance of a spirit has always produced on the minds of those to

whom he has appeared, to be convinced that such would be the case with ourselves. What were the effects of the appearance of a spirit on the mind of Job? "Fear," says he, "came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face, the hair of my flesh stood up. It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof; an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God; shall a man be more pure than His maker?" And what were the effects on the mind of Saul, when in his distress he had recourse to witchcraft, and saw the mysterious figure which personated Samuel, rising slowly out of the earth covered with a mantle? Saul, we are told, "fell straightway upon the earth, and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel, and there was no strength in him." And what were the effects on the minds of the disciples when they saw Christ in the dim, uncertain light of the early morning, walking spectre-like on the sea? "And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a spirit,' and they cried out for fear."

It would be easy to adduce other instances, to show that were one to rise from the dead and come to us, with the view of urging us to give attention to the subject of religion, we should be so intimidated by his presence as to be utterly unable to give to his message the attention it would require. We have but to remember the confusion and even horror of mind which some dark and hideous dream of the night produced when perhaps we imagined we conversed with the dead, or saw them in their shrouds, or heard them speaking to us in the very tones of tenderness in which we so often heard them on earth, to be convinced that our dismay would be inconceivably greater if a messenger from the dead were actually to appear, and that his appearance would render us utterly incapable of giving attention to any disclosures he might be commissioned to make. And here, let it be remarked, that the written Word has in this respect a claim to our attention, which no communication brought to us by a message from the dead ever could possess. We can examine that word at our leisure. We can apply to it the



severest tests of criticism. We can compare scripture with scripture, and see if they harmonize. We can weigh the evidence of prophecy, and ascertain for ourselves if the prophecies were exactly fulfilled. We can sift the evidence arising from miracles, and see if those miracles are sufficient to accredit the claims of a divine teacher. We can look at the internal evidences of the truth of Christianity, and see whether in point of number and clearness they are such as to convince us that it is in deed and in truth the Word of the Living God. We can, in one word, do with the Bible as we should do with a man in the witness-box if we wished to know if he spoke the truth, examine and cross-examine it, and thus arrive at a conviction of its divine origin inconceivably stronger than would be produced by the mere statement of a messenger from the dead, whose appearance would, in all probability, so overwhelm us with terror, that, like the soldiers at the sepulchre, we should fall at his feet as dead men.

It should be considered, also, that a messenger from the dead could not give us the *some varied*

*and convincing evidence that he was sent to us from God* as the Bible gives us that it is His Word.

Granting that we were sufficiently calm and self-possessed in the presence of a messenger from the dead to give the necessary attention to his message, how should we be able to satisfy ourselves that he was in deed and in truth a messenger from Heaven? How should we know but that he who stood before us clothed in robes of light, and professing to be a messenger from Heaven, was not a messenger from Hell, and had put on those robes to dazzle and deceive?

It would be necessary were a messenger from the dead to appear to us that he should be able to give us such evidence that he was sent to us from God as should leave no reasonable doubt in our minds, for were the slightest suspicion on that point to exist, all that he had to say would be rendered of no value; and what evidence could be given us, in point of luminousness and extent, at all equal to that which the word of God gives us that it was written by holy men of

God, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost?

The Hebrew Lawgiver grounded his claims to be a messenger from God, on the miracles he performed. Christ did the same. "The blind," says He, "received their sight, the deaf hear, and the lepers are cleansed." The Apostles rested their claims to inspiration partly on the same grounds, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth rise up and walk;" and if a messenger from the dead were to appear it would be necessary before he began to deliver his message, whatever that message might be, that he should convince us, by the performance of some mighty work, that he was a servant of the Most High God. Now what work of this kind could he perform which has not already been performed? Suppose that with the view of satisfying our minds that he was a messenger from Heaven we should ask him to turn water into wine, or water into blood, or make the sun stand still, or cause it to thunder, or to walk upon the sea, or to still the tempest, these things have been done already. Or suppose we

should ask him to raise the dead, is it at all likely that the performance of either the one or the other of those acts would convince us that he was a divine messenger, that he brought a divine message, and as a necessary consequence that we should be brought to repentance? That neither the one nor the other would have the slightest effect in the way of bringing us to repentance is evident from the case of the Jews who, though they saw Lazarus raised from the dead by Christ, instead of being either convinced or converted were so exasperated that they sought to destroy both Christ and him.\* In one word, no evidence that a messenger from the dead could give us would at all equal or even approach in force and clearness that which the Bible gives us that it is the word of God. And hence we find Peter, who was one of the three admitted to behold Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, who saw Moses and Elias, and conversed with them, and even heard a voice from the excellent glory saying, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him," putting *more value on the word of God* as evidence of the

\* Luke, 11th chap., 53rd v.

truth of Christianity than on the voice he heard and the scene he witnessed, and saying, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well, that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts." For what is the evidence which that word gives us? It gives us the evidence arising from the fulfilment of prophecy, the evidence arising from the performance of miracles, the evidence arising from the agreement of its various writers. All this evidence it gives us when it asks us to believe it is the word of God. It does not ask us to believe that it is divine because ecclesiastical councils have determined that it is so. It does not ask us to believe it because the best and wisest men who have ever lived considered it to be so. It does not ask us to believe because it has the seal of antiquity on it, and it is the best and the oldest book in the world. It asks us to test its claims. It asks us, to examine and cross-examine it. It says to us as Christ said to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands, reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless

but believing." And the question is, could a messenger from the dead give us the same amount and variety of evidence that he came from God, that the Bible gives us it is the word of God? Undoubtedly, he could not. How irresistible, therefore, is the conclusion that if we are not enlightened, convinced, impressed by the word of God, neither should we be so were we plied with extraordinary and even supernatural means!

Let it be observed still further that a messenger from the dead could not disclose to us *truths more fitted to alarm, awaken, and convince*, than those which are revealed in the Bible. As it is only by the force of truth that the mind can be impressed, so if a messenger from the dead were to come to us, he must seek to impress us either by addressing to us new truths, or by repeating the truths already revealed, or by delivering them in such a manner, and with such an emphasis as would arrest our attention. In regard to new truths, there are no new truths he could tell us which would be of any importance to us. Besides are we not warned by an Apostle against adding to, or taking from, the truth already revealed?

“Though an angel from Heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” Then in regard to the truths which have been revealed, what could a messenger from the dead tell us which has not been told us already better than he could do it? Suppose that he should inform us that he had been in Hell, and that there was no doubt there was such a place, though some men said it was a fiction, what more could he tell us than God has already told us concerning it? Or suppose that he should say to us he had been in Heaven, and had seen Christ sitting on his throne of Glory, with ten thousand times ten thousand angels standing before Him, and the redeemed crying, “Worthy, worthy is the Lamb that was slain,” what more could he tell us than the Bible does when it says “That the city has no need of the sun neither of the moon, and that its twelve gates are twelve pearls, and a river of water clear as crystal runs through the streets of it?”

What more in word could he tell us about God or Christ, or sin, or faith, or the way of salvation,

or the influence of the Spirit than we already know? He could not only impart to us no information on these subjects which we do not already possess, but, the probability is, the information we possess is clearer, fuller, and more satisfactory than any he could give us, in the same way that a well-digested and authentic history of a country puts us in possession of far more information regarding it than the single and unsupported testimony of one of its inhabitants. As, however, there may be still in the mind a lurking impression that the testimony of one who had seen Heaven or been in Hell would be more likely to convince us than the written Word, let us suppose that a messenger from the dead stood before us, and, as our minds are in general more impressed by what is dark and terrible than by what is bright and cheerful, let us suppose he is a messenger from the world of woe, and comes to us with wringing hands, and tearful eyes, and imploring looks, and beseeching us to beware of entering that place of torment. Would such a messenger be likely to



impress us? There are some who may think that if he stood before them and told them he had seen that worm which never dies, and felt the fire that is never quenched, they would be sure to repent, and starting up from their present lethargy, like those roused by a galvanic shock, would become new men. Whatever grounds we have for thinking so, there are more for thinking the contrary.

I. For if such a messenger could appear, he could not tell us *more* about Hell than God has told us, nor could he tell it so well.

II. If he were to attempt to tell us what he had suffered, he would not *be able* to do so, for there is reason to believe that, as Paul could not describe what he had seen in Heaven, so one who had been in Hell could not find language to describe the intensity of his suffering.

III. However great the impression that might be made on the mind at the time by the description of what he had seen, heard, and suffered, the impression, as we see from the case of those who have witnessed in the field of battle scenes of

carnage and blood would gradually wear off, and we should at last relapse into our old and inveterate habits.

It is still more deserving of consideration that a messenger from the dead could not in urging us to repentance employ more *numerous and powerful motives* than those which the word of God employs.

The word of God employs every conceivable motive to urge us to repentance. It appeals to our fears, and says, "Fear not them who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell." It appeals to our hopes, and tells us that our repentance will produce joy in heaven, such as is not experienced over ninety and nine righteous persons, who need no repentance. It appeals to our ambition, and tells us if we repent we shall gain for ourselves glory, honour, and immortality. It appeals to our self-interest, and tells us that godliness is profitable for all things having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come. It appeals to our

love of life, and says, "With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation." It appeals to our sense of gratitude, and says, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice." With all these motives does the word of God urge us to repentance, and what *additional* motives could a messenger from the dead employ, if these fail to move us? He might, it is true, urge us to repentance, by attempting to give us a more minute and graphic description of the terrors of Hell, but these terrors have often been set before us in the preaching of the gospel. He might urge us to repentance, by describing to us at somewhat greater length the glories of Heaven, but those glories are set before us by God himself in richer colours than any with which he could paint them. He might remind us that he was once in that world of probation, in which we are now, and that we shall soon be in that world of retribution, where he is, but we know this already, and nothing he could say to us on the subject would be so solemn as this, "That as death leaves us, judgment will find us." He might

urge us to repentance, by reminding us, that if we are lost, we shall wish, as he has done a thousand times, we had never entered upon existence. We know, however, already, that if we perish, our blood will be upon our own heads, and that it would have been better for us that we had never been born. What motives then could he employ in addition to those which have been employed? All that he could say, even could he make our blood run cold, by relating to us what he had seen of the agonies of the lost, or the glories of the redeemed, would fall short of what God Himself has said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise *perish*." Who can doubt, therefore, that if we are not brought to earnest consideration by the ordinary means which God employs, all extraordinary means would be utterly unavailing?

Let it be observed still further, a messenger from the dead, however vividly he might depict the glories of Heaven, or however gloomily he might describe the misery of Hell, could not *effect that change of heart* which can alone be produced by the Spirit of God. To suppose, for a single moment, that any messenger from the

dead could so allure us by his description of the glories of Heaven, or appal us by his delineations of the miseries of Hell, as to produce that change of heart which takes place in repentance, is to indulge a supposition as wild and chimerical as that of supposing that the mere influence of the rays of the sun would break into fragments the rock which rises from the depths of the ocean, and upon whose hoary sides the winds have beat and the waves foamed for centuries, without producing the least perceptible effect, except that they have rendered it harder and more unyielding. To dissolve that rock into a liquid mass, a greater power must go forth than that which lies hid either in waves, or winds, or sunbeams. The earthquake must lend its help. The fires which lie smouldering beneath its rocky base must assail it, and along with these, the still small but all powerful voice of God must go forth. And as the power of God alone can soften that old rock of the ocean, so the power of the Spirit of God alone can produce that change of heart which takes place in repentance. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the

Lord." And such being the necessity of divine influence, what could all that a messenger from the dead could tell us of Heaven or of Hell avail towards producing that great and fundamental change of heart which takes place in repentance? "Except a man be born again," said our Saviour on one occasion, "he cannot see the kingdom of God." Such being the case, is it not obvious that his disclosures, however strange and startling, could have no other effect than to gratify a barren curiosity, or produce a momentary alarm? It was in vain that the prophet prophesied unto the bones, until the Spirit of God breathed on them, and it would be as much in vain, in so far as a change of heart is concerned, that a messenger from the dead would appear to us.

Let it be considered finally, that messengers *have come from the dead*, and men have not only been not convinced, but have been confirmed in *impenitence and unbelief*. Was not Lazarus a messenger from the dead? And yet, what was the effect produced by his rising from the dead on the minds of the Jews? It is expressly mentioned, that instead of being softened into penitence,

they sought to kill Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, and not content with wanting to kill Lazarus, sought to kill Christ too. The widow of Nain's son was a messenger from the dead. As a crowd came out of the gate of the city, bearing on a bier a young man, the only son of a widowed mother, Jesus met the procession, and said unto the dead, "Young man, I say unto thee arise," and the young man arose and he delivered him to his mother. Did one of that crowd repent because this young man rose from the dead? In all probability not one. Then, there was another messenger from the dead, the ruler's daughter. Jesus said unto her, "Daughter, I say unto thee arise." Did this messenger cause any one to repent? We do not read of any other effects, except those of wonder and idle curiosity, being produced by it. But there was still another messenger from the dead, He who had raised others from the dead, Himself arose, and not only arose, but He remained on earth forty days, and was seen by five hundred witnesses, and what was the effect

of his arising from the dead? Why the very men who conversed with him would scarcely believe that he had risen, and it was not until the day of Pentecost with its mighty rushing wind, symbolising the descent of the Spirit, had fully come, that even the Apostles themselves were able to grasp the truth that the Lord was risen indeed, and that they had believed "no cunningly devised fable." And if the appearance of Christ from the dead failed to convince the men of that day, what reason have we to think the appearance of a messenger from the dead would convince the men of ours? Not only would he fail to lead us to repentance, but the probability is that we should, after he had left us, become more confirmed in unbelief, as Pharoah was when the thunders and the lightnings were departed. The conclusion then at which we arrive is that if the ordinary means of grace do not bring us to repentance no extraordinary means will avail. We see the utter fruitlessness of all supernatural and extraordinary means in the case of the monarch of Egypt. What means could have been employed that were more fitted to lead him to repentance



than those that were used? The rivers of Egypt were turned into blood—it became so dark that men could not see each other even at noontide—loathsome reptiles found their way into the chambers of the palace—the first born were slain in such numbers that a voice of lamentation went up from the land of Egypt, and there was not a house in which there was not one dead. Yet what were the effects of these extraordinary means to bring Pharoah to repentance? They but confirmed him in impenitence, so that it is stated, “when the thunders and lightnings were departed, he *hardened his heart yet the more, and sinned.*” And as it was in his case so it would be in ours. We may think that if we saw a vision, or heard a voice, or witnessed some fiery portent in the heavens, or beheld a spirit standing before us, we would be so convinced and impressed that we should repent. We forget, however, what repentance is, when we say so, and that nothing short of the divine power can make any man repent. It is granted that were a messenger from the dead to come to us at the dead hour of night, and to tell us all he had seen and heard in the

world of torment, the miser would think, for a time at least, less of his gold, and the voluptuary of the brimming goblet, and the man of the world of its business or its pleasures, but would any of these be brought to repentance by the visit and the address of such a messenger? So far would this be from being the case that after the influence of his visit had worn off, each and all would return without regret to their favourite and easily-besetting sin. The drunkard would return to his indulgence, and laugh at his own credulity in listening to what in his sober senses he now believed to be a phantom of the night. The profane swearer would utter some dreadful imprecation over the spectre which had disturbed him in his sinful practice, and the man of the world would calculate his gains, and cling to his wealth with increased eagerness, believing that what he had seen was a freak of fancy. Such would be the effect of the visit of a messenger from the dead, on the great majority of men. It could not make them repent. It might make them grave and subdued, and melancholy for a time, but these feelings would wear off and they would

become more reckless, inconsiderate, and worldly than ever. Nothing short of a divine power can make man repent. We could as soon, without that Divine Agent, repent, as we could raise the dead.\* Least of all could the visit of a messenger from the dead effect that great, fundamental, necessary change. For do we not observe that the mind becomes accustomed to everything, and that even if we had one from the dead standing every night before us, we should become at last so familiar with his aspect and voice, and manner and utterance, that we should cease to listen to him, and learn to say, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a more convenient season I will send for thee." It was but a few years ago that the flocks and herds ran terrified in all directions when they saw the rolling clouds of steam, and heard the roar of the steam engine as it rushed in fury past the fields where they quietly fed. Do they run now? They not only do not run, but they stand and gaze quietly in the presence of a power which once filled them with terror and alarm. As it is with them so

\* See note B.

it would be with us. A messenger from the dead if he came but once would not satisfy us, and if he came *often*, he would soon become so familiar to us, that we should learn from the force of habit to eat and drink and get merry in his presence, and when he urged us to repent, say, "I pray thee have me excused."

[ III. ]

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTIVATING THE HABIT  
OF EJACULATORY PRAYER.

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“Prayer ardent opens Heaven, lets down a stream  
Of Glory on the consecrated hour  
Of man, in audience with the Deity :  
Who worships the Great God, that instant joins  
The first in Heaven, and sets his foot on Hell.”

YOUNG.

PRAYER may be divided into several distinct kinds. There is, first of all, public prayer, when a promiscuous multitude breathe forth at one and the same time their common supplications to the Great Parent of all. Then there is social prayer, when a few individuals meet together for the purpose of imploring some special blessing, or of confessing some special sin. Then there is domestic prayer, which, though allied to it, is

yet in some respects distinct, when the father of a family, acting as its high priest, and surrounded by his children and the members of his household, offer up the morning and evening sacrifice. Then there is intercessory prayer, when those who are separated from each other by the great barriers of nature, supplicate on each other's behalf those blessings of which they may stand in need. Then there is secret prayer, when an individual entering into the solitude of his closet holds communion with Him who "seeth in secret." Last of all, there is ejaculatory prayer, when the christian darts up to Heaven some short but appropriate petition suggested by the peculiar\* circumstances in which at the moment he is placed. It is necessary to most of all the other kinds of prayer that they should be offered at a particular time, in a particular place, or in particular circumstances; that they should continue for a longer or shorter period of time; that they should embrace a greater or lesser variety of topics; that they should be more or less formal in their structure, but while this is the case,

\* See note C.

ejaculatory prayer is independent of them all, and may be offered up without the slightest regard to time, to place, or to structure. Place is not necessary to its performance. It may be offered up in any place, in the church, in the shop, in the field, in the market, in the street, in the ship, on land or on sea, wherever, in one word, God is present to hear and we are to pray. And as place is not necessary, so neither is *time*. We may engage in ejaculatory prayer at any time, in the morning when we first awake,—at noontide when we are engaged with the business of life,—in the evening when we go out to meditate under the light of moon or stars,—at midnight when all around us is still, and we lie wakeful, thinking of the irrevocable past, or brooding over the unknown future,—in the bosom of the domestic circle, when we are surrounded by those we love and whose sympathies “double our joys and halve our sorrows,” — when we are in the sick chamber, ministering to the wants of the beloved child, the revered parent, or attached friend, — when we stand around

the open sepulchre, and feel as the coffin is lowered and the crumbling clods fall upon it, the hollowness and vanity of all we most love on earth. In each and all of these situations we may offer up to God those breathings of the heart which come under the name of ejaculatory prayer. And while neither time nor place are essential to this kind of prayer, so neither is *attention to structure or arrangement*. In all the other varieties of prayer it is indispensably necessary, if we would not incur the guilt of making a rash and unwarrantable approach to the Divine Being, that some regard should be paid to structure or arrangement. In public prayer, and when called to confess the sins, acknowledge the wants, and supplicate the blessings needed by a promiscuous assembly, it is absolutely necessary that the thoughts of him who leads the devotions of the assembled throng should follow in some particular order, and be more or less distinguished by continuity of thought and expression. To some extent the same necessity exists in social prayer, if we would not render it



a vapid and unprofitable exercise. Domestic prayer also, though it admits of greater latitude, should be distinguished by some regard to arrangement; and so should intercessory prayer, if we are desirous that our own minds should be duly affected by the thoughts to which we give utterance. But while each and all of these kinds of prayer demand some regard to form, and cannot be successfully performed without it, ejaculatory prayer is independent of it all, and may be offered up without the slightest regard to that continuity of thought and arrangement of the several parts by which in general they should be distinguished.

To ejaculatory prayer one thing, and only one, is necessary, and that is a devout frame of mind, and when that frame exists, this kind of prayer will flow spontaneously from it as water from the fountain, ascending to Heaven at one time in the form of petition, at another in that of intercession, at another in that of confession, and at another in that of fervent thanksgiving and praise. So independent of all those circumstances which are necessary to the other kinds of devotion is ejacu-

latory prayer that there is not a time when we cannot offer it, not a place where it cannot be presented, and not an individual who cannot engage in it.

One of the earliest instances on record of this kind of prayer is mentioned in scripture, where we find that Hannah, in circumstances which precluded her from engaging in a more formal act of devotion, made known her wants to God in ejaculatory supplication. "Now Hannah spake in her heart—only her lips moved—her voice was not heard."\* The prayers of David seem also to have been often of this character, as when we find him uttering such short and abrupt petitions as these, "Undertake for me," and indeed the circumstances into which he was thrown, as for example when he found on his return from Ziklag that the Philistines had consumed it with fire, or when he was called to mourn over the child that was suddenly smitten with disease, or to follow to the grave his beloved Absalom were circumstances which would press so severely on his spirit that it would necessarily

\* 1st Samuel, 1st chap., 13th v.

seek relief for itself in this form of prayer. But were there no example in the old Testament, the new would furnish instances in abundance of those who, when placed in circumstances of difficulty, or danger, or distress, betook themselves at once to this kind of prayer. What was the prayer of the publican when he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner," but an ejaculation darted up at the moment from a soul which could find no relief from the pressure of guilt under which it groaned except in this way? Did not our Saviour too when suddenly placed in a position of perplexity or danger seek and find relief by giving utterance to some short ejaculation? We have but to look at Him as He invokes the divine blessing on the simple meal that was spread in the desert, or at the grave of Lazarus, when His spirit was troubled, and his tears flowed fast, or as He struggles in the garden and can find utterance for no more than the short petition, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," or as He hangs on the Cross and implores on His murderers the divine forgiveness in the brief but emphatic prayer, "Father, forgive them,

for they know not what they do," — we have but to look at Him on these occasions and see how He at once betook Himself to this kind of prayer for guidance or relief. If other examples were needed in support of the propriety and importance of this kind of devotion, we might refer to the case of the proto-martyr Stephen, who in circumstances when it was utterly impossible for him to engage in direct and lengthened supplication, when surrounded by a ferocious multitude, assailed by a shower of stones, and writhing with agonizing pain, relieved his oppressed spirit, at one time by the prayer, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and at another by the prayer, "Lord, lay not this to their charge," and which prayers, though short, it may be remarked in passing, were so signally successful that he saw the Heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Other instances might be added, both from the Old and the New Testament, but these are sufficient to show that there is ample scriptural warrant for the duty, that under both economies ejaculatory prayer was practised, and comes recommended to us by the example of those who

lived under the "shadowy moonlight of Judaism," as well as those who lived at the dawn of a brighter and long looked for day.

There are circumstances when this kind of prayer alone is practicable, and to engage in a more prolonged exercise of devotion is out of our power, and we must either pray in this way or not pray at all. Such, for example, is the hour of sickness, when either languor of mind or suffering of body may prevent us from concentrating our thoughts in a prolonged act of supplication. Such is the hour of temptation, when sin puts on its fairest aspect, and holds up that cup of enchantment, which, though beautiful without, contains within a wine that if merely tasted will lull the soul into a slumber from which it may never more awake. Such is the hour of danger, when we are thrown into a state of alarm, and our minds are overwhelmed at the prospect of some new and unexpected calamity. Such is the hour of duty, when we are called upon to perform some duty for which we feel ourselves incompetent, and when our failure would be followed by the most painful

or disastrous results. Such is the hour of death, when we shall neither have time nor strength, except to utter short and broken petitions, suggested by the solemn circumstances in which we are placed. In each and all of these situations, ejaculatory prayer is most suitable, and may be practised when it would be out of our power to enter into a fuller and more minute statement of our case. Indeed, one great advantage of this kind of prayer is that, while the other varieties of it are applicable to particular circumstances, and to stated times, ejaculatory prayer is confined to none of these and may be practised in situations when insurmountable obstacles would prevent us from engaging in any other. There are circumstances into which we are thrown, when, if we pray at all, we must pray in the form of ejaculation, and there are few who have not experienced that there is scarcely a day which passes over our heads which does not place us in a position we never occupied before, and calls upon us to engage in some duty in a great measure new. Let the circumstances, however, which may occur, be as varied as they will; let the position in which we are placed be as re-

sponsible as may be conceived ; let the duties we are summoned to discharge be as onerous as possible ; let the trials we are called to encounter be the most painful and appalling—however diversified the circumstances, however difficult the position, however formidable the duty, however appalling the trials, ejaculatory prayer is suitable to them all, and that assistance of which we stand in need will come down from above in answer to it, by a law as fixed as that by which the magnetic rod brings down the lightnings that lie buried in the clouds, and from which it feels itself drawn by an influence it can neither resist nor overcome.

One great benefit resulting from the habit of ejaculatory prayer would be, that it would *increase our spirituality of mind*. “To be spiritually minded is life and peace.” If we would aspire to great spirituality of thought and feeling, it is absolutely necessary that we should be instant in this kind of prayer. The vital air is not more necessary to the support of flame, than is prayer to the maintenance of elevated spirituality, and as the tendency of flame

is to grow dull and languid when the surrounding atmosphere becomes deprived of those properties which are requisite to its existence, so the tendency of the heart is rapidly to deteriorate in spirituality when prayer is seldom resorted to, or is perfunctorily performed. Without prayer, faith will grow dim, love will languish, hope will decay, the spiritual world, however vividly it may have been realized before, will become as indistinct as some airy vision which dazzles for a moment and then disappears.

If, then, we would aim at a higher degree of spirituality of mind and feeling, let us avail ourselves of this method of keeping our spirits in vital contact with the Infinite and Eternal source of light and life.

Another advantage that we should derive from engaging in this kind of prayer, is that it would keep us *habitually prepared* both for the duties and trials of life. He who enters the world without prayer, enters it unarmed, and is chargeable with as great an act of neglect as the soldier who, when summoned to the field of battle, should, in his



hurried preparation, leave behind him his sword or his shield.

One great advantage of ejaculatory prayer is that it keeps us in a constant state of preparation for whatever may occur, so that, instead of having to seek our weapons when they are needed, we have them in our possession, and at a moment's notice can encounter the various foes with whom we have to contend.

Another advantage still that would accrue from ejaculatory prayer is that it would materially increase our *enjoyment of religion*. It was the saying of a distinguished divine on his death-bed "a life of communion with God is the happiest life on earth," and if this remark be true, as all will admit who have put it to the test, then to enjoy this life it is absolutely necessary that we live in the practice of this kind of prayer. Not that we are at liberty to dispense with more prolonged and comprehensive exercises of devotion, but while attending carefully to these we must, if we would not lose that spirituality of mind which is life and peace; if we would walk c'osely with God, and enjoy so far as can be enjoyed on earth

a foretaste of that happiness which the spirits of the just have before the throne; if we would be useful to our families, useful to the church, useful to the world, we must not only pray at stated times, but we must live in the very atmosphere of prayer. Prayer must be the element in which we live, and move, and have our being. We must pray not only when we enter our closet and no eye sees us but that Eye which never slumbers or sleeps,—not only in the sanctuary when we mingle our petitions with those of the multitude who keep holy day,—not only in the domestic circle when the spectacle is beheld on which angels might love to gaze, of a family who hope to meet around the throne in Heaven, meeting around the domestic altar on earth; but we must pray when we sit down and when we rise up, when we are in the house and by the way, in the market place, and in the field, in society and in solitude, at home and abroad, by night and by day. Into no situation must we enter, and no duty must we undertake, without having first sought by means of ejaculatory prayer assistance from above, and feel, moreover, that

without it we are as unfit to encounter the trials or discharge the duties that crowd upon us in life, as the son of Jesse was to meet the champion of the Philistines without having first proved his armour, and selected the five smooth stones from the brook.

The benefits of ejaculatory prayer may be briefly summed up in an increase of light, faith, love, hope, joy, peace, holiness,—in one word, all that is fitted to ennoble, elevate, and purify our nature.

If the sentiment of a distinguished moralist be just, “that whatever withdraws us from the power of our senses,—whatever makes the past or the future predominate over the present, advances us in the dignity of thinking beings,”—then by no means so largely as by it can those influences be enjoyed which produce these beneficial and blessed effects. In its calm and hallowed light, we shall see how vast is eternity, and how little is time; and as the various objects along the line of the horizon are seen in *diminished proportions* by him who has embarked for some distant shore, after the vessel in which he has set

sail has unfurled her snowy plumage to the breeze, so, in like manner, the objects of time will be seen by us, not only receding, but *contracting* into their proper dimensions, while those which belong to a future and eternal state will stand forth in massive outline, clear and strong like the peaks of some lofty range of mountains, when the clouds which have been hanging over them have either melted beneath the sun or been swept away by the wind. In one word, we shall enjoy such "visions and revelations of the Lord" as are not to be found in any other way, as well as attain a growing fitness for those sublimer services which await us in the skies.\*

\* See note D.

## [ IV. ]

### THE SHORTNESS AND VANITY OF HUMAN LIFE.

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“Life may be compared to one of the golden goblets that flash at our banquets on the stage. It looks very splendid, and you fancy it is full of the most intoxicating draughts, but put it to your lips and you will find there is nothing in it—nothing but hollowness, mockery, and disappointment.”

It has been wisely ordered by the Divine Being that human life, instead of flowing on from its commencement to its close unmarked by any great epochs, should be distinguished by numbers of these returning at stated intervals, and loudly calling upon us by their return to consider where we are, and whither we are going. These epochs mark more or less all our lives. There is the anniversary of the day on which we were born, and which carries our thoughts backward to the spot where first we breathed the breath of life. There

is the anniversary of the day on which we committed a parent to the tomb, and which revives as it comes round our fading recollections of the form which was so soon destined to fade, and which but for being thus periodically retouched with fresh colours, would rapidly pass from recollection. There is the anniversary of the day on which we took some important step in life—entered upon its business—left the home of our childhood—or formed a connexion with those to whom we were at one time strangers, and who are now indissolubly associated with our character and happiness. There is the periodical return of these and other days, and it cannot but be regarded as a proof at once of the Divine wisdom and goodness that our life should have been marked by these instead of flowing on undiversified from beginning to end. Had it been so ordered that life should have flowed on like a calm unruffled stream, it would have lulled us by its very flow into a forgetfulness of its great object and end, as the man who sits musing at sunset on the bank of a quiet river is lulled by the melodious ripple of its waters into a slumber from which

he is sometimes only awakened by the descending darkness and chilling dews of night. Broken up, however, as life is by new and ever returning epochs, it is well nigh impossible that the most inconsiderate should indulge long in unbroken slumber. Slumber may indeed steal over the spirit for a time. That slumber, however, is ever and anon broken up, by the knell of departing years. One epoch of life returns after another, delivering its stern message. The birthday comes round with its solemn and hallowed recollections. Then comes the funeral day. Then comes the day on which we took some important step in life. Then comes the day on which we committed a parent to the tomb. Then, the day on which we mourned over a child. And then, as though these preachers of mortality were not enough, as if in addition to Moses and the Prophets we should have the advantage of one rising from the dead, a New and Mighty Preacher stands before us at the close of each revolving year, and utters in our hearing words of truth and soberness, solemn as those uttered by the old man who came up from the earth covered with a mantle, when he

said to the King of Israel:—"To-morrow thou and thy sons shall be with me." Without such remembrancers of our frail and dying condition life would have resembled a clock without a dial-plate and giving no intimation of the lapse of time, but ordered as it is now, it resembles a clock with gigantic face, pendulum, and hands, and a bell deep and sonorous ringing out the knell of each departed hour, and reminding us as it does so of the brevity as well as the vanity of this short and feverish life.

Let us look at life in these two great aspects, and first it will appear inexpressibly *short* to us if we compare it with the *vast periods of duration* which rolled on before we came into existence. Compared with those periods the portion of time assigned to each of us is as small as that occupied by the bubble which springs up on the bosom of a river, and which after glittering for a moment mingles with the waters from which it sprang. That river flowed on before that bubble appeared on its surface, and will flow on after it has disappeared, and in like manner the great tide of human existence, which, issuing from



the abyss of one eternity, hastens to pour itself into another, rushed along before we appeared on its surface as impetuously as it does now, and will rush on when we have disappeared for ever, in its unfathomed depths. Let us think of the vast cycles of time which rolled on before we began to exist, and we shall see how short is the period allotted for our stay on earth. Take but the period of one hundred years. During that period—and that is but one of many such—how many millions of human beings to whom life stretched itself out in all the gay and verdant colours in which it appears to us, have been born, lived, acted their part, and passed away for ever! If we confine our attention to the neighbourhood in which our lot has been cast, what multitudes during that short period of time have ceased to exist! One hundred years ago they were as active, as eager, and as earnest as ourselves. They sowed, and ploughed, and reaped. They rose early in the morning and walked those fields we walk, and watched the rising blade, and returned at night, worn out with the toils of the day. They married and were given in marriage. They ate and drank,

and laughed and wept. They came to the house of God on the Sabbath. They assembled in the market place. They walked in solemn procession in the funeral train. They had children born to them, and their children, after laying the heads of their parents in the grave, took up their position and continued their labours. They ploughed the same fields, occupied the same dwellings, attended the same market, bought, sold, bartered, ate and drank as they did, and in their time followed those who had gone before down to the shades of death. Their children in due time took their places, cultivated the same fields, occupied the same houses, found life to be the same changeful and chequered scene, and after having acted their part, followed those who had preceded them to the world unseen. Let us calculate, if we can, the number of those who have lived and died during a single century within the precincts of a small provincial town, or obscure rural hamlet, and if we find that impracticable, how much more hopeless the task of computing the periods which have swept on during the ages which are past, and in the course

of which the number of human beings that have lived, acted their part, and passed away, defy all calculation.\*

But life is short compared with the *great work* which must be done in it.

It is considered, in relation to *work* which must be done, that every period of time seems long or short. If a man were doomed by an inexorable tyrant to master the science of astronomy within one year, and in default of his doing so, to forfeit his life, he might surely plead that that period was too short to make himself acquainted with the principles and details of a science which might take up the hours of the longest life, and yet the year which would be too short to master the science of astronomy, would be found too long to employ in poring over a work of fiction. A man placed by the decree of some despot in a cell, which gave him only a glimpse of the sky—furnished with a telescope—and chart of the heavens, and told that unless within one year he could decipher their glittering hieroglyphics, point out the position of comets

\* See note E.

which had not been seen for centuries, weigh  
suns and stars, he should pay the penalty of his  
life, would justly consider he was called to do in one  
year what might occupy a century, and op-  
pressed with the magnitude of the work, would  
sink into hopeless and irrecoverable despair. And  
yet what is the work we have supposed assigned  
to him compared with that which has been  
assigned to each of us? The work ap-  
pointed for us to do within this brief  
span of life is more stupendous in relation  
to that span than that assigned to him. No such  
work requires to be performed by the most toil-  
worn of those whom Labour employs in its  
manufactories and mines. The slave who works in  
the plantations until the big drops of sweat stand  
out on his brow, and the veins are swollen like  
whipcord; the mariner who toils on the ocean  
until, stiff with cold and drenched with spray,  
he falls asleep at the helm; the soldier who keeps  
his watch in the trenches, until exhausted with  
fatigue, he can keep it no longer,—none of these  
have such work to perform as that we have to do,  
if we would fulfil the great end of existence.

Their work, hard as it is, consists chiefly in a conflict with outward and material forces. It is a conflict with wind, fire, water, hunger, and cold, and a conflict, moreover, in which a stout heart and a strong arm may win the day. The work, however, which we have to do, and which must be done, if we would not sow for ourselves the seeds of eternal remorse, is greater and more arduous still. It is appointed to us to work out our salvation with fear and trembling—to strive to enter the straight gate—to pluck out the right eye, and cut off the right arm. We are called upon “to put off the old man which is corrupt, and to put on the new man.” We are called to a stern and terrific struggle, not with outward forces, which may be subdued by a greater force brought to bear upon them, but with ourselves. Fire and sword are to be carried, not into the entrenchments of an outward foe, but into the entrenchments of our hearts. Old things must pass away, and all things become new, and who that considers the magnitude of the work to be done, and the little time allowed for doing it, will not allow that even, were our life greatly prolonged, it would be too

short for what we have to do, and suffer, and acquire? The work of the little builder which raises under the waters of the Southern Ocean vast reefs of coral, great as it appears, when considered in relation to its strength and the brief term of its existence, is nevertheless *less* in point of fact than that assigned to us if we would escape the doom of having lived to no purpose.

The shortness of life will appear, however, in a more striking point of view, if we compare it with the *eternity* which awaits us. It is a solemn truth, and one too which lessens the value of all the distinctions of life, puts rich and poor, learned and unlearned, on the same common level, that eternity is equally the *birth-right* of every human being. The rich man, who, sitting in his lordly hall, can look out on the greater part of the extended landscape as his own, can claim no more—the poor man, who, sitting at his scanty board, knows not where he is to get his next meal, can claim no less. Each too is hastening forward to that great inheritance as rapidly as time can carry him, and each, when he arrives within its mysterious precincts, will look back on the distinctions of

human life, much in the same light as the travellers in the caravan, which moves slowly through the desert, look back when it reaches its destination on the varieties of costumes by which they were distinguished from each other on the way, and which are there thrown aside. To that eternity each of us is hastening. It is our property, as nothing else in this world is. There is nothing here we can truly call our own. We cannot call our wealth our own, for it has served others, it serves us, and it will serve others still when we are done with it. We cannot call our souls our own, for they belong to God, and were he to speak but the word, they would at once return to Him. We cannot call lands, houses, silver, gold, our own. These things form no part of our possessions, they existed before we did, and will continue to exist after our connexion with them is at an end. Eternity is, however, ours. It is ours as nothing else is, and what compared with this boundless duration, is the short period assigned to our existence on earth? It shrinks into insignificance, it dwindles to a point, it bears no more proportion to that vast and illimitable

expanse which lies before us, and which the poorest can claim as well as the richest, than a drop of water bears a proportion to the ocean, or a spark of fire to the sun, or a particle of dust to the mighty aggregate of similar particles, which go to make up the world that bears us on its surface, though the circuits of immensity.\*

But let us look at the *Vanity* of human life. It is vain as well as short, and vain not only in those conditions when it is corroded by disease, or darkened by poverty, or goaded by misfortune, but vain in the very highest, so that in the case of the rich man who fares sumptuously every day, as well as the poor man who feeds on the crumbs from his table, it is neither more nor less than a scene of sickening, miserable, and wretched illusion. Nor is it only at certain periods it is characterised by vanity. It is vain from beginning to end, from the time the child is sung to sleep in his cradle, to the time when an old man he is wrapt in his shroud and consigned to the coffin, a scene of sickening, heartless, miserable, empty illusion, as full of empty pretence as is the haughty bird who prides himself

\* See note F.



on the plumage which the winter wind will tear off, and as void of satisfaction as is the mind of the man who dreams he is in a garden of the East, fanned by the softest breezes, and feasting on the richest fruits, when he awakes and finds his fire out, his board unfurnished, and hears the shrill winter wind whistling through his casement. Such is the view which experience and observation concur in giving of human life, and it will not be difficult to show that it is in harmony with reason and with truth.

And, first of all, let it be considered, that the element of *vanity mingles itself with all human enjoyments*. It is unnecessary to say that a feeling of emptiness, dissatisfaction, and often disgust enters pre-eminently into the very essence of all enjoyments which are sensual, or derive their zest from the gratification of the senses. How soon the eye ceases to derive pleasure from looking on the most beautiful landscape! How soon the ear becomes worn out with listening to the sweetest music! How soon the appetite becomes cloyed when partaking of the rarest delicacies, and even feels it to be a relief to return

to the crust of bread and the cruise of water ! It may be supposed, however, that the pleasures derivable from wealth, knowledge, power, are exempt from this character. Such, however, is not the case. The same quality of vanity which belongs to the pleasures of sense belongs to these. The man who seeks happiness in the pursuit of wealth, finds far less pleasure in the possession than in the pursuit. He had far more enjoyment in the toiling for the wealth which enables him to surround himself with so many luxuries than he now has in possessing it. Possession has brought with it responsibilities, anxieties, and sorrows, which were unknown and unimagined when he was in humbler circumstances. He did not see the thorns which he now discovers are so thickly scattered on the couch of down on which he lies, or the snakes which lie coiled up amongst the flowers, or the grim and ghastly shapes which come forth at the dead hour of night, at the bidding of conscience, and look down from the tapestried walls. Nor is it less true that a character of vanity belongs to the pleasures of knowledge. “ In much wisdom is

much grief." The more we know, the more we discover how much we do not know. As one peak is gained, other peaks appear in the distance. As the limits of one horizon are reached another horizon expands before us. We find, moreover, that there is no certainty in most of the branches of human knowledge. One system is supplanted by another. The sage of one century is looked upon as a mere tyro by the men of another. The disciple becomes wiser than his master, and after having perplexed ourselves in our efforts to discover the true from the false, we find that both are so intermingled that we cannot separate them, and that even if we could, we should be after all as children playing on the sea-shore gathering a few pebbles, while the vast illimitable ocean of truth lies far away in the future.

We shall see still further the vanity of life if we consider that this element enters more or less into all its *labours*. What a world of toil this is! Not more busy in laying the foundation of future islands and continents are the little builders in the waters of the Southern seas than are the song

of men in pursuing each his own appointed toil. One man pursues his labours in the recesses of the earth. He blasts its rocks, and unlocks its hidden riches. Far from the eye of man he toils during the dark night, and to him almost equally dark day. Holding the pickaxe in one hand, and his lamp in the other, he threads his way through passages which seem to lead to the regions of the dead, rather than to be a part of the world of the living. And mark the vanity of his toil. The lamp he carries in his hand kindles the air he breathes into living flame, and he who toiled until the drops stood on his brow, and his sinews started from their places, is stretched out on the floor of the mine a blackened and unsightly corpse. There is another man. He toils in a different field. Science is his calling, and the sublime of all the sciences—that of Astronomy. While other men sleep he watches the stars in their courses. While other men live luxuriously he brings his body into subjection. While other men toil for gold, he cares nothing for it. His home is amid the stars, and he finds his way on wings furnished by

philosophy and science through the circuits of immensity. Is the labour of this man doomed also to be in vain? It is often. His mind reels under the burden of the discoveries he makes,—the eminence he reaches turns him giddy,—and he who lived amongst the stars comes sometimes at the close of life to be the companion of the moping idiot, whom he would have at one time pitied or despised. And thus is it through all the varieties of human experience.

In addition to this, however, a character of vanity is stamped on all *human expectations*.

In all stages of his existence, man is the dupe of hope. In childhood, hope tells him that the world into which he has come is a scene of enchantment and beauty, and far from suspecting the truth of the statement, he believes it, and revels in the gorgeous vision of life which spreads before him, coloured with the richest hues of the rainbow. In manhood he awakes from the dream of childhood, and discovers that the scene which fancy had painted with the most dazzling colours is hollow and false, and that he mistook a mere

picture of palaces, fountains, and flowers, for the reality. He awakens, however, only from one delusion to become the victim of another greater and deeper. Appearing to him in another form, with a different voice, and in robes which look at a distance fair as those of truth herself, the enchantress again comes to him and says, "Make thyself master of wealth ; it will make thee happy, it will procure for thee pleasures thou didst never taste before, men will worship thee as thou shalt pass by them in thy glittering equipage, and with thy prancing steeds, they will honour thee in life, and speak kindly of thee after thou hast gone." And, poor dupe that he is, he believes the sorceress, he toils hard, he denies himself food, and rest, and recreation. The rising sun sees him at his toil. Night finds him calculating how he may increase his store. He reaches at last the lofty eminence on which he wished to stand, but just as he has reached it, the ground sinks beneath him, and he and his wealth disappear in the yawning chasm below. And thus it is that, lured on by one hope after another, and all of which turn out deceptive and vain, man spends the time given to

him to prepare for another world, until death comes, and the vision of life fades for ever from his view. \*

There is but one way in which we can render life not a vain, empty, miserable illusion, but a great and blessed reality, and that is *by living for eternity*. It is living for eternity alone that can make life to any of us a source of blessing. Separated from it, it is but a dream, a vision, an enigma, a masquerade. Let us live for eternity, and we shall make life in its humblest conditions, as well as in its highest, a source of blessing to ourselves here, as well as of glory hereafter. We shall then live to some purpose. The whole complexion of our existence will be changed. We shall live a pure and God-like life. And when we come to the end of it, instead of having to mourn that we lived in vain, that we wasted our energies, that we misimproved our time, that we threw away a pearl which worlds cannot restore, we shall have the satisfaction of looking back on a life spent to some purpose, and forward to a life of which the present is but the germ.

\* See note G.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
the innumerable caravan, that moves

“To that mysterious realm where each shall take  
His chamber in the silent halls of Death’;  
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,  
Scourged to his dungeon—but approach the grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
Around him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”



[ V. ]

THE PRACTICAL CONSEQUENCES OF DISBELIEVING  
THE DOCTRINE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

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“Twice twenty days He sojourn’d here on earth,  
And show’d Himself alive to chosen witnesses  
By proofs so strong, that the most slow-asserting  
Had not a scruple left. This having done  
He mounted up to Heaven.”

BLAIR.

THERE are two distinct, and, in some respects, equally conclusive ways of proving the truth of a doctrine. The one is by what may be called a direct, the other by an indirect process of reasoning. If the doctrine to be proved were that of the immortality of the soul, that doctrine might be proved either by the one or the other of these two processes. If we adopt the direct process, we should adduce in support of the doctrine, such

proofs as the following—its supposed immateriality, and consequent independence of those material laws by which the body is resolved into its kindred dust,—its irrepressible desire after a future state of existence, and the natural inference that He who implanted that desire will meet it as He meets all its other desires by presenting an appropriate object,—its capacity of making unlimited advancement in knowledge and happiness—the mysterious and indefinable horror which seizes it when the idea of annihilation is but dimly realised,—the universality of the belief that it is immortal,—the foreboding which it has of a day of retribution,—and last, though not least, the superiority which the soul itself shows to death itself, and which, sometimes, enables it even to smile at the drawn dagger, and to defy its point. This is what might be called the direct process, and such a process is quite sufficient to impress the mind with a conviction that that ethereal essence which burns within us is totally different in its nature from the frame with which it has been allied, and will rise at that change, which, for want of a more appropriate name, we call

death, but which is simply a change in the disposition of those particles of matter which blended together compose the body to its native and eternal source. There is, however, another process on which we might fall back in the event of this failing to convince us, and that is the indirect, and though the proofs or rather the presumptions which it supplies, possess neither the transparency nor the force of those belonging to the former method, yet they are such as to shut us up to the alternative of believing either that the soul is immortal, or believing what is more difficult, that propositions in themselves incongruous and untenable are true. Following the indirect process, we should arrive at this conclusion, in some such way as the following:—If the soul be not immortal, it must be essentially the same in its nature with matter, and there is no difference between the spirit which soars upwards and onwards with an eye that is never dazzled, and a wing that never tires, and the clod we see turned up by the ploughshare, and which, though dull and insensate, can boast as high an origin and end. If the soul be not immortal, that

longing after immortality which never leaves us has been inserted into our nature for the purpose of deceiving and tormenting us. If the soul be not immortal, that capacity it possesses of making endless progression, and which makes it feel itself at home amid the greatest mysteries of nature, is a capacity shared in common with it by the beasts that perish, and belongs equally to them as to him who, by means of it, can walk amid the stars, and make the lightnings his playmates. If the soul be not immortal the great and good of all ages who believed it to be so, and who, when tortured with the rack, and loaded with fetters, and doomed to drink the cup of poison, maintained this belief, died the victims of a grand delusion. If the soul be not immortal, the universality of the opinion that it is so has no weight, and the universality of an opinion, instead of being a presumptive proof that it is true, is a presumptive proof that it is false. If the soul be not immortal, the forebodings of conscience are a dream, and conscience is a deceiver. If the soul be not immortal, the distinction between vice and virtue is fallacious, virtue will have no reward, and vice

no punishment. If the soul be not immortal, non-existence is preferable to existence, and it were better that we had never opened our eyes on this wide and glorious universe than opened them for a brief moment, and after obtaining a glimpse of its unsearchable riches, be doomed to have them shut in eternal death. Such would be the result of an appeal to the indirect process of proof for the immortality of the soul, and it will be observed that while the direct process could not fail to impress us with an irresistible conviction that it is immortal, the indirect by shutting us up to the necessity, either of believing the doctrine in question, or believing in conclusions the most incongruous and contradictory, would have great power. Now just as there is a direct and indirect argument for the immortality of the soul, so there is a direct and indirect argument for the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ. To the latter of these modes of proof let us now give for a little our attention.

Let it be observed then, first, that if the evidence we have for the resurrection of Christ be false, evidence of *every other kind is equally so*, and should be at once and summarily rejected.

The amount of evidence for the resurrection of Christ is vast and varied. There is the testimony of his disciples, who asserted again and again that He was risen from the dead, and who persevered in reiterating the assertion, though threatened with torture, persecution, and death. There is the testimony of the five hundred brethren, by whom He was seen at once, and the majority of whom were alive long afterwards, and willing to depone to the fact. There is the testimony of the Jews who admitted that the body of Christ had disappeared, and who explained the fact of its disappearance by fabricating a story which carries on its front the marks of falsehood and imposture. There is the testimony arising from the simultaneous and universal change of the Sabbath from the last to the first day of the week in commemoration of the event, and which change surely could not have been brought about without an adequate cause. There is the testimony arising from the existence of the sacramental rite, a rite which has been observed ever since in commemoration of the event, and will be observed until the end of the world. Such is

the amount of testimony we have for the truth of this cardinal doctrine of Christianity. We have the testimony of friends and of foes, the testimony of type and of prophecy, as well as the testimony of positive institutions standing up amid the ravages of time and the roll of ages, like those monumental pillars which are seen by the traveller in the desert, covered with mysterious hieroglyphics, and which will stand for centuries to come to attest the reality of the events they were intended to commemorate. If then, testimony so vast and varied be false, on what other kind of testimony can we rely? We are shut up to the alternative, either of admitting that this testimony is true, and that consequently Christ has risen, or that it is false. There is no middle course. We must yield at once and implicitly to the belief that Christ has risen, or rejecting testimony from every other source regard it as the dream of enthusiastic or the delusion of insane minds. If we reject all this testimony in favour of the resurrection of Christ, we must reject the testimony of historians, and believe that the events which they narrate never occurred, the heroes

they describe never existed, and the achievements of virtue and the deeds of villany they ascribe to them were purely imaginary. We must believe that no such city as Athens ever existed, and that no such philosopher as Socrates ever lived. We must believe that the whole course of events, which history so circumstantially narrates, and solemnly authenticates, are fabulous and false. We must believe that Rome never existed, except in the imagination of the historian, though its prostrate columns and mouldering arches tell us that it did. If we reject the testimony in favour of the Resurrection of Christ, we must reject, if we would be consistent, all existing and contemporaneous testimony. We must reject the testimony of our friends even when they assure us on oath of facts they have witnessed, and charge them either with having been deceived or cherishing an intention to deceive. We must reject the testimony of travellers, and believe that the countries they profess to describe, so far from having had a real existence, existed only in their over heated and deluded imaginations. To be consistent we must believe that



nothing more exists except what we can see with our eyes, and subject to our touch. In one word, if we reject the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, we must reject all other evidence, since we have a greater amount of evidence for this fact than we have for any other in the world.

Further, let it be observed, if the evidence for the resurrection of Christ be false, the evidence for our own resurrection is *equally so*. The resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection are indissolubly united. They bear to each other the relation of cause and effect. His resurrection is at once a proof and a pledge that we shall rise. It is a proof, inasmuch as it shows that the body though deserted for a season by the soul, may be re-animated, and that, difficult as it is to believe that God will raise the dead, no obstacle can for a moment stand in the way of the purposes of a Being who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. In addition, however, to its being a proof, it is a pledge. Just as the tints of living green we see in early spring, beginning to spread over those fields that were so recently bleak and barren, are a pledge that, in due time, we shall

see them covered with the yellow harvest, so the resurrection of Christ, in like manner, is a pledge that this world, which is sown even more thickly with the dead than are those fields with grains of corn, shall yet cast from its bosom those who now sleep there. If the evidence which we have for the resurrection of Christ then be true, it inevitably follows that we shall rise also. The body may be committed to the tomb, or it may be consigned to the waters, or it may be devoured by the flames, or it may moulder so entirely away that it may become undistinguishable from common dust. No trace may be left of the curiously constructed fabric, or if any particles survive they may have entered as component parts into surrounding substances, and sprung up in the verdure of other landscapes, or be rolling along amid the waters of mighty rivers. All this matters not. If Christ be risen, we must rise too. No power can disunite us. We are eternally associated. The power which drew Him from the grave will draw us, and difficult though it may be of belief, we shall rise in renovated vigour, and take our place amongst the companies who shall spring

at the sound of the trumpet from the trackless forests, and the unfathomed oceans, and the vast solitudes of this crowded world. If, however, Christ be not risen, there is and can be no resurrection for us. It matters not that we have presented to us in the world around us so many striking intimations of this truth. We may look at the flowers as they put on their living tints of green and gold, and they may preach to us the probability of a similar revival for ourselves. The woods may resume their wonted foliage, and flourishing green again bid us from their leafy heights look forward to a time when we shall put on the robes of immortality. Day rising from the sepulchre of night may preach to us the same great truth. If Christ, however, be not risen, they preach in vain—they are false prophets—they speak lies—they give forth like the oracles of antiquity false utterances. The resurrection of Christ and that alone is a proof of our own, and if the evidence for that event be false, and the event has not taken place, there is no hope for us. Our resurrection is a phantom, which mocks us with brilliant but false colours. It is a figment of the

mind, it is a delusion of fancy, and profoundly as theologians have written, and eloquently as divines have preached, of the certainty of the event, it is ideal, and there is no alternative for us but to make up our minds to sleep for ever in the adamantine fetters of the tomb.

While the resurrection of Christ furnishes the only solid and satisfactory proof for the resurrection of the human body, it furnishes the only solid and satisfactory argument *for the immortality of the human soul*. It is true that other and weighty reasons may be adduced in support of our belief of that immortality.\* Presuming that it is immaterial, we may infer that what is immaterial must be imperishable, but how do we know that it is so? Besides, what proof have we that what is immaterial is indestructible? Looking at its vast capacities, we may argue that those capacities require ampler scope for exercise than this world can furnish, but may not those capacities, though seemingly vast to us, be in themselves *absolutely small*, and if it be a law of nature that creatures possessing the most com-

\* See note H.

plicated organization, equally with those whose organization is more simple, be doomed equally to decay, why may not spirits come under the operation of the same stern and exterminating law? Looking at the proofs which are usually adduced, the evidence may indeed seem complete that man is immortal. Strong, however, as is that evidence, it is defective, if we leave out of account that furnished by the Resurrection of Christ. It is indeed no proof at all. It amounts only to a probability. It gives us but the *hope* that it may be so. If, then, no satisfactory proof of the immortality of the soul can be derived from these sources, whence are we to derive it? How are we to be assured that the soul which we feel burning within us shall never die? What is the grand and conclusive proof? That proof must be derived from the resurrection of Christ. In the fact that He was raised from the dead, we have positive and palpable proof that the soul *survives* the body—that the soul can exist apart from the body—that while the body is lying in the tomb the soul may exist consciously elsewhere, that after a period of absence it may return to it, and

re-animating it with new vigour, cause the eyes that were sealed in death to open, the ear that was closed to hear, and the tongue that was mute and motionless, to pour forth once more the melodies of speech. As the resurrection of Christ proves that His soul survived death, it proves also that ours shall survive it. If, however, Christ be not risen, if His soul never returned to the body it had left, it follows as a necessary consequence that none of our souls shall ever return. It follows that the whole of that revelation which asserts that man is immortal is false. It follows that the spirits of those whom that revelation has taught us to consider as existing in a disembodied state have perished. It follows that we ourselves are doomed to perish. In the language of the Apostle, 1 Corin., xv., 32. "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts, what advantageth it me if the dead rise not ; let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." It follows the soul we have so often been taught to believe is immortal, like its corruptible companion, is doomed to perish, and that when we have shut our eyes on the scenes of time, we have shut them

finally and for ever. Such is the conclusion which the rejection of the evidence for Christ's resurrection would warrant. If that evidence be false, revelation is false, and if revelation be false, the grave is the goal of human hopes, eternity is a fiction, and death the extinction and the end of our being.

It is not less true than it is strange, that when we think of the dead we always think of them as living in some distant, though to us unknown region, and are unwilling to believe, and indeed cannot believe, that they have perished. In the hour of pensive thought, we imagine them looking down upon us from some pure and lofty sphere, with eyes of tenderness, if not waving over us their wings of light. In what way we have come to entertain this belief it is hard to say, but we do entertain it. It exists in such strength that we believe it will be found in every human heart.

What comes, however, of this innate and universal conviction, if Christ has not risen?

If He has risen, all who have ever lived at this moment live also. The patriarch who lived before the flood lives. The child that leapt with joy when

he first beheld Heaven's triumphal arch lives. The prophets who prophesied of the grace that should come to us live. The martyrs who suffered for the "testimony of Jesus," and ascended to Heaven in a chariot of flame, live. Our own familiar and loved friends, those with whom we took secret counsel, with whom we sat at the sacramental table, with whom we were wont to speak of the Saviour, and who told us we should meet again, live. All live if Christ be risen. Not one spirit has perished. If, however, Christ be not risen, the conclusion is equally unavoidable, that all have become extinct. None have escaped. The grave has engulfed all in its mighty vortex. All that has existed of intellect, of emotion, of conscience, of virtue, through all ages, is no more. It has disappeared as disappears annually the glories of the summer or the autumnal landscape. Spirits that once swelled with conceptions too vast for utterance have been blotted out. Hearts that bled at the sight of human suffering have ceased to throb. Death has crushed all under his mighty tread. The friends we loved, and whom we had hoped to have met again, have bade us an eternal farewell.



They have left us for ever, and we in our turn are doomed in like manner to leave those with whom we are now connected.

Such are the conclusions we must adopt, if we reject this doctrine. Let us, by way of contrast, however, rapidly glance at those we may adopt if we believe it.

If Christ be risen, the atonement He offered for human guilt has been accepted, and we may rejoice in the hope that our sins have been finally and for ever forgiven.

As the deliverance of the captive from bondage is a proof that the ransom offered for his rescue has been accepted, so the resurrection of Christ is a proof that the price paid for the sins of His people has been accepted, that Divine justice has been satisfied, and that to them there is not now nor will be hereafter any condemnation. "He was delivered for our offences, and rose for our justification," and just as the release of the debtor from prison is a proof that the debt is paid, and that the law has no further claim upon him, so the release of the Great Surety from that prison into which He

voluntarily descended, and where he paid the last instalment of the mighty sum required for the remission of sins, is a proof that the debt we owed to the divine law has been cancelled, and that the Law has no claim upon us. Let those of us who are looking to Christ as our only Saviour, who are reposing on His sacrifice, who are trusting in Him as the Mediator between God and man, banish all our fears, and rejoice in the assurance that our sins are pardoned. We have nothing to dread. The law which we have dishonoured has been magnified. The justice we had provoked has wreaked its penalties on the head of a Substitute, and from the heights of that Heaven which was once barred against us there now floats unfurled the flag of invitation, entreating and urging us to take refuge within its peaceful bosom. What ground of fear have we then now? "Christ has risen," we may exultingly say, and because "He lives we shall live also."

If Christ be risen the empire of death has been overthrown, and death disarmed of His power. What an empire has death! Vast and populous as may be other empires, that over which

He reigns is vaster and more populous still. It extends from sea to sea, and from shore to shore. It numbers amongst its subjects men of all creeds, climes, colours, and languages. In the language of an Apostle "*Death reigns.*" He reigns in our cities, the largest of them all, containing in their repositories greater numbers of the dead than of the living. He reigns in our valleys, the sweetest and most secluded, having its mouldering stones and its moss covered epitaphs to remind us that the Great Spoiler has been at work amongst its population. He reigns in our houses, every house being filled in its turn with his trophies, and presenting to the eye of the spectator the awful insignia of his presence. He reigns over the great and wide sea, its dark recesses being crowded with vast numbers of those of our race who have fallen beneath his sceptre. He reigns everywhere. Air, earth, and ocean, while full of life, are yet as full of death. If Christ, however, is risen, it is evident that though that empire is still permitted to exist, it exists by sufferance. Its days are numbered, and the time is at no great distance when the despot to whom it belongs shall be

obliged to deliver up the keys of his kingdom to Him who came to destroy death, and by his resurrection has given us proof that He has fulfilled the prediction, "O death, I will be thy plagues." Those keys have already been delivered up, and He who has taken possession of them has them so completely in His keeping, that He says, "I have the keys of Hell and of Death." And though death still exists, He exists by permission. He is a fallen enemy. He is a dethroned monarch. His power to injure is gone, and the period is at no great distance when the crown he still wears shall be torn from his head, his sceptre broken in pieces, and the throne on which he has sat, and from age to age issued his inexorable decrees, be overturned, and crumble into dust.

If Christ has risen we have every reason to take comfort under the loss of Christian friends. If Christ be not risen, those friends have perished. They have fallen into eternal unconsciousness, they have sunk into annihilation, they are as though they had never

been, and all the hopes we have cherished, in regard to meeting them in a higher and a more extended scene of existence are a delusion. They have as much ceased to exist as does the meteoric light, which, after gleaming for a moment in the upper regions of the air, shoots downwards to the sea, and is quenched in its waters. We shall see them no more. We have parted for ever, and that prospect of meeting them which so often refreshes the heart is as visionary as that which meets the eyes of the traveller in the desert, and after mocking him with the sight of fountains, gardens, and fruits, vanishes into air. If, however, Christ has risen, how glorious the prospect! Those friends are not dead but sleep. Their emancipated spirits bask in the splendour of the beatific vision. Their souls flourish in immortal youth. They stand before the throne of God and the Lamb. They hunger no more, neither thirst any more. They are priests and kings unto God. They have done for ever with sin, sorrow, and infirmity. They are robed in purest white, and grasp immortal palms. They serve God day and

night in His temple. And though their bodies moulder in the grave, of that grave they may say in language as beautiful as it is true :—

“ Grave, the guardian of our dust ;  
Grave, the treasury of the skies ;  
Every atom of thy trust  
Rests in hope again to rise.

“ Hark, the judgment trumpet calls,  
Soul rebuild thy house of clay,  
Immortality thy walls,  
And eternity thy day !”

If Christ be risen, we may look forward to our own dissolution with hope and confidence. Who dreads not the prospect of dissolution? who fears not to enter the cold and silent grave? who feels not when we think of the worm, the coffin, and the shroud, that a chill comes over the spirit, and we almost wish we had never opened our eyes on a world where we are permitted to sojourn for so brief a season? And yet if Christ be risen, what have we in reality to fear? Is it the loss of the body? We lose during life many portions of that body, and if the soul survives these losses, what ground have we for believing it will not survive that still greater loss which we call death? Is it the leaving behind us friends to

whom we are attached? we leave them for a brief period, and besides while we leave them we join a multitude of others who are waiting to welcome us to the shores of immortality. Is it entering an unknown world? The world in which we now live was once as much unknown to us as is the state beyond the grave, and besides, what place can be strange which is pervaded by the presence and gladdened by the smiles of that Being whom to know is to love? Is it resigning the body we now have for another? At the bidding of its Creator, the worm resigns the body which it has long occupied, that it may put on one which He has prepared for it, and should we be afraid to do the same when told that we must be unclothed? Let us look at death in these points of view, and we shall see that, though the penalty of sin, it has been turned into a blessing, and accomplishes as wise and beneficial a purpose, as do some of the most powerful poisons with which we are acquainted, and which, so far from proving destructive, in the hands of the physician,\* are useful and salutary

\* See note I.

to life and health. If we do so, we shall look upon it as a change as necessary to the perfection of our nature as the change through which the child passes at opening manhood, or some of the other periods of human existence are necessary to prepare him for the duties of the present life. Let us remember that the soul which we carry within can never die, but is ethereal and immortal. And as for the grave let us learn to look upon it as a bed of rest, a place of repose for the body, worn out by life's fitful fever, and from which it shall rise resplendent with beauty, and instinct with immortal vigour.

Not to thy eternal resting place  
Shalt thou retire alone. Thou shalt lie down  
With patriarchs of the infant world, with kings,  
The powerful of the earth, the wise and good,  
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills  
Rock-ribb'd and ancient as the sun—the vales  
Stretching in pensive quietness unseen—  
The venerable woods—rivers that move  
In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
That make the meadows green, and pour'd round all  
Old oceans grey and melancholy waste—  
Are but the solemn decorations all  
Of the great tomb of man.



## [ VI ]

### THE ILLUSIVENESS OF RELIGIOUS ERROR.

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“Once upon the inclined road of error, and there is no swiftness so tremendous as that with which we dash down the plane, no insensibility so obstinate as that which fastens on us through the quick descent. The start once made, there is neither stopping nor waking until the last and lowest depth is sounded.”

THERE are few things more remarkable than the extent to which the human eye may be deceived by the skilful disposition of light and shade. An artist may produce on the canvass such a truthful representation of a waterfall, a forest, a river, a shipwreck, that if it be placed at a due distance, and seen in a favourable light, the spectator will imagine that he sees the water dashing in foam from the rock, the forest bending beneath the blast, the river rushing in gladness to the ocean, and the vessel tossed on an angry sea. In this case the eye is deceived by the brilliant

colouring, the disposition of light and shade, and the influence of distance or perspective; and the strange thing is that while there is no organ which more quickly discovers deception when on its guard than the eye, there is none which at the same time can be made the subject of greater illusions. So true is this, that there are few who do not remember a period of their lives when they regarded the rainbow as a solid pathway which led to Heaven, and it is probable that every effort to have demonstrated to them that it was merely a collection of vapour illuminated by the rays of the sun would have failed as completely as the effort to have shown them that the earth was hung upon nothing. But while the eye of the body is the subject of these and other illusions, mistaking sometimes the dark thunderous cloud resting on the verge of the distant horizon of the sea for the far off land, and the meteoric light which is sometimes seen dancing at night in the morass for the lamp or cheerful fire of the long-looked for cottage, the eye of the soul is subject to still greater, and often mistakes the soft,

flowery, crowded road which leads to ruin, for that steep, arduous, elevated ascent which leads to Heaven.

Let us look at some of these forms of illusion, or how it is that a way which seems right to a man may have a dark and fatal termination.

There is first of all a *life of practical Atheism*. There are two kinds of Atheism—speculative and practical. The speculative Atheist, overlooking all the proofs of the divine existence which surround him in the heavens above, blazing with the divine glory; the earth beneath full of His goodness; the great and wide sea lifting up its voice from age to age; his own body fearfully and wonderfully made; his soul still more mysteriously formed—the speculative Atheist, overlooking all these proofs of the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, has the presumption to say there is none, and in saying that there is none, arrogates to himself the very *attribute of omniscience* which he denies to the Supreme Ruler. For must not he be omniscient who professes to demonstrate, as the speculative Atheist does, that there is no God?\* For granting

\* See note K.

that no evidence of the existence of a Supreme Being could be found in the world in which we live, does that prove that no evidences are to be found elsewhere? It would be a rash conclusion if a man were to say that, because no fossil remains of some extinct species of animal could be found in the small island in which he lived, no such remains could be found in any other part of the world. It is equally rash on the part of the speculative Atheist to say that because he can discover no proofs of the existence of a Divine Being in this world, there are none elsewhere, and, not until he has searched every corner of the vast universe, and discovered no proof of a Divine Being there, is he entitled to say that there is no God; and to say there is none, before making such a search, is to make himself God, to usurp to himself the possession of that attribute of omniscience he denies to his Maker. There are few it is to be hoped who have been so far left to themselves as to say there is no God. And if there are, they are probably fitter objects for prayer than for argument. We speak, however, of practical Atheism, and this is

a much more common state of mind, as well as a more dangerous one than the former. To say there is no God is bad enough. To say however there is a God, and to act as though there were none ; to say that we believe that God is everywhere present, yet never to realize that presence ; to say that we believe that God is infinitely good, and never lift up our heart in gratitude for that goodness ; to say that we believe Him to be infinitely great, and never to prostrate ourselves in the presence of that greatness—infininitely merciful, and never to implore His mercy—infininitely just, and never to seek to propitiate that justice ; to say in one word that we believe God exists ; that when we lie down at night it is He who draws the curtain of darkness round our couch ; that when we rise in the morning it is He who pours the golden light into our chamber ; that when we are in sickness it is He who restores us to health ; that when we gather in the abundant harvest it is to Him we are indebted for it—to say in one word that we believe that there is a God, and yet to act as though there were none, is not this state of practical Atheism a far worse state to

be in than the other, and does it not moreover pour greater contempt on God himself? What should we think of a man, who, after being introduced into the presence of a great sovereign, and asked to take his seat at his table, and reminded that he was in his presence by the portraits of a long line of ancestors that hung on the tapestried walls, by massive chandeliers throwing down their floods of light, by the gold and silver vessels on the banquet table, by courtiers in their robes of state; what would we say of a man who, surrounded by these and other proofs of the presence of that sovereign, should so far forget himself as to talk lightly of his person, or to make no reference whatever in the course of his conversation to his existence? Such a man would show that, whatever his profession of loyalty might be, it was of little value; and what is the value of the religion of him who professes to believe there is a God, but acts as though there were none, who says he believes God hates injustice, and is guilty of acts of fraud, says that he believes God hates vice, and yet lives a life of vice; says that he believes that

God will one day call him to judgment, and yet acts as if there were to be none? What is the value of a belief of this kind? Its value is that of salt without savour. It would be more consistent and honest for a man to say at once :—  
 “I believe there is no God; that religion is a fiction; that Heaven is a dream; that eternity is a chimera; than to say that he believes there are such realities, and yet to act as though there were none.”

There is another kind of life which appears right to a man, but which will have a fatal termination, and that is *a life of indifference or unconcern to the objects which religion presents for our consideration*. There are no objects which can be named greater, more interesting, or more important than those which religion presents to our notice. They are the greatest of all objects, inasmuch as they relate to the soul, to God, to judgment, and to eternity. They are moreover objects in which we have a deeper personal interest than we have in any other, inasmuch as a time is coming when our interest in all others

will cease, and our interest in them become fixed and eternal. They are at the same time the most important of all objects, for what will it profit a man, "if he gain the world and lose his soul?" Such being the case, might it not be expected that these objects would so impress our attention, and absorb our interest, that we should be comparatively indifferent to every other, and regarding all others as secondary and subordinate, fix upon them our undivided attention and regard? This is, however, so far from being the case that there are numerous individuals who take no interest in these objects whatever, and are far more deeply interested in the most frivolous topic which can occupy the attention, than they are in the great problems connected with eternity and the soul. It would be considered a strange thing if a man placed on the summit of an Alpine peak, were to manifest such an indifference to the grand, beautiful, and glorious objects which surrounded him on all sides, as to shut his eyes upon them, or turn away in unconcern, or prefer to amuse himself with some game of chance, while the Heavens above him with their unfathomed



depths, and dark ravines, and dreadful chasms, and lakes glittering in noontide splendour, solicited his notice, and claimed his admiration. An individual, who in such situation manifested indifference to the objects of grandeur, and beauty which surrounded him, would justly be considered as possessed of great insensibility; but great as his would be, is not his greater who can contemplate the objects which religion presents to his notice, without feeling his soul stirred to its lowest depths? It is unquestionably greater, inasmuch as the latter has a personal interest in those objects, and that interest, instead of decaying, as all other interests do, becomes daily deeper and more vital. Yet, how many are living in this state of indifference, in regard to God, and their relation to Him, the soul and its safety, Death, and its nearness, Redemption and its issues!

All that has been said regarding a life of practical atheism or religious indifference, holds true of a life of pleasure. There are two kinds of pleasure, virtuous and vicious, forbid-

den and unforbidden. The former of these kinds—virtuous—comprises all those enjoyments which the beneficent Creator has annexed as a reward to the observance of the natural and moral laws He has appointed. Nor are they inconsiderable either in number or variety, including as they do, the pleasures which spring from intellectual culture, the pleasures of devotion, the pleasures of memory, the pleasures of hope ; the pleasure arising from the gratification of the natural appetites within prescribed limits. Into this garden of pleasure, stocked with trees of golden fruitage, watered by a river of water of life, and fanned by the breezes of Heaven, man has free access. His Creator invites him to enter. No serpent lurks amongst its flowers. No flaming sword is placed at its gate. An invitation is given to all to enter, and the command is :—“ Of every tree of *this* garden thou mayest freely eat.” In close proximity, however, to this garden of lawful pleasure, there is another which an enemy has planted, and where trees laden with poisonous fruit display their ripened clusters, bowers of amaranthine

beauty are placed for the entertainment of the visitors, lamps of variegated light are hung amongst the branches, strains of music that lull the soul to rest float on all sides, and syren forms, decked out in all the beauty of virtue, invite the wanderer to enter and find rest for his soul. In this garden, all is deception. The fruit which has so rich a bloom is poisonous. Serpents lie hid among the flowers. A dreadful chasm lies beneath the bower of pleasure, and he who enters it is lulled into a sleep from which he seldom awakes, and while asleep descends into that gulf of darkness over which it is placed. In other words, God allows us the free use of those pleasures, which are pure, innocent, and virtuous. He gives us the pleasures of intellectual culture, of devotion, of society, of religion, and debars us only from those for which He knows we are unfitted, and which would be injurious. How many are there, however, who prefer vicious to virtuous pleasure, forbidden to unforbidden, the Tree of knowledge of good and evil, hung with golden blossoms and poisonous fruit, to the Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations ! It is

difficult to say what pleasures are lawful and what are unlawful. Let it be borne in mind, however, that every pleasure which indisposes the mind for giving its attention to the subject of religion, for solemn reflection, for prayer, for communion with Christ, is and must be bad. Much may be said in justification of it now, but it will look as differently to us when we have entered the eternal world, and left behind us the objects of time and sense, as the cliffs on which the sun pours its rich flood of light when it sets, and that look warm and beautiful in that light, look different when it has disappeared and they stand out stern, cold, and rugged in the deepening twilight. It is the *end* of everything which determines its true character. When we enter upon a speculation in business, or undertake a journey, or sow our seed, or reap our harvests, it is the end that we look at. Let us be equally considerate and careful in looking at the end in a matter of infinitely greater magnitude and moment—the end of the life we are now living. There are two paths before us—the path of duty, rough, thorny, rugged, at the outset, but

terminating in a world of glory—the path of pleasure, soft, flowery, verdant, crowded, but leading to a gulf of eternal darkness. Better to choose the former, though the feet are blistered with the sands of the desert, and the temples ache with the burden and heat of the day, than choose the former, for strewn with flowers, and planted with trees, laden with luscious fruit, though it be, it terminates in a region where darkness reigns—Hope never enters, and the great God who now loves and pities all, loves and pities no more.

## [ VII. ]

### A LEAF AND ITS LESSONS.

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“Even the dispositions of the human soul are expressed by flowers. Thus, silent grief is portrayed by the weeping willow; sadness, by the angelica; shuddering, by the aspen; melancholy, by the cypress; desire of meeting again, by the star-wort; the night-smelling rocket is a figure of life, as it stands on the frontiers between light and darkness.”

It is related that with, the view of keeping alive in their minds a sense of the shortness and uncertainty of human life, the ancient Egyptians placed a human skeleton in a conspicuous position in the chamber where they were accustomed to keep their festive entertainments. While every one will admit that the object which they had in view was in the highest degree commendable, it must be allowed, at the same time, that living as we do in a world which is full of objects fitted to teach us, most impressively, that we are mortal, it was in a great measure unnecessary. It is even

doubtful if the constant exhibition of such an object would not be likely to make those who looked upon it, and became familiar with it, forgetful of the truth it was intended to inculcate. One thing is certain, that men whose business calls them to gaze frequently on the relics of mortality, are often the least impressed by them, and it is easy to conceive that the contemplation of an object so grim and ghastly as a skeleton, instead of deepening, as it was intended to do, the impression of human frailty, might produce in the minds of the spectators, by a violent re-action, a sentiment which would cause them to feel, as well as to say while they looked on the spectral monitor, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

With the view of teaching us that we are frail and fading, Nature furnishes us at this pensive season with an object more fitted, if we mistake not, to deepen in our minds the impression of our mortality than that which was hung up in the festive chambers of Egypt. A leaf, it must be admitted, does not seem at first sight so well fitted to be a stern preacher of mortality as a

skeleton. It will be found, however, on reflection, to furnish as striking an emblem of human frailty as the other, and if we look at it as we should, we shall need henceforth no skeleton to teach us that we are passing rapidly away, but shall hear from each leaf that we behold hanging shrivelled from the bough, or swept away by the wind, or whirling in yellow clusters along our path, a voice as solemn as that which is rung out by the knell of each departing year. Let us take up, then, a withered leaf, and see what that leaf teaches us ; first regarding God ; and, second, what it teaches us regarding ourselves.

A leaf is a striking monument of *the Divine power*.

When we think of the power of God, we think of it in connection with objects which are majestic and imposing, and not of objects which are minute and almost imperceptible. We think of the power of God setting forth the mountains, appointing to the sea a boundary it cannot pass, causing suns and systems to pursue their harmonious rounds, and hanging the earth on nothing. Is power, however, displayed only in the produc-



tion of objects which are great and imposing? It is displayed in the production of objects which are minute and microscopic, as well as of those which are massive and majestic. As much power was required to make an insect as an angel, and though, no doubt, an angel is a higher production of the divine power, yet the power which was adequate to the production of the one was adequate also to the production of the other. It is in this way that a leaf is a striking monument of the divine power. Nothing but the power of God could have called it into existence. The power of man could no more have formed it than it could have formed the world in which we live, or the heavens which are stretched over our heads. A divine power—the very power which called the world out of nothing—was necessary to create the tiniest leaf we see hanging on the tree, and without such an exertion of power, that leaf never could have existed, and therefore it is that every leaf we see fluttering in the breeze, or trodden in the dust, repeats in our ear what worlds and systems of worlds are each repeating, “The Hand that made us is divine.”

A leaf is a striking monument of *the Divine wisdom*. The wisdom of God may be seen in little things as well as in great. The ant God has endowed with an instinct which leads it to lay up a store of provisions against the coming winter, diminutive though it be, is as striking a production of the divine wisdom, as the eagle which He has taught to soar on a "wing that never tires, and with an eye that is never dazzled." In the structure and functions of the eagle there may be a higher display of that wisdom; but wisdom is displayed conspicuously in each, and without divine wisdom guiding divine power, neither the one nor the other could ever have existed. In the same way, the humblest leaf that we look upon, is as striking a monument of that wisdom. Man himself, fearfully and wonderfully made as he is, did not require for his formation a higher wisdom than was necessary for the formation of that leaf; and whether we look on it as it hangs in all its beauty, glittering with the dew, and sparkling with the light of Heaven, or see it lying sere and shrivelled on our path, we have presented to us one of the most wonderful pro-

ductions of the manifold wisdom of God that is to be seen in the world.

A leaf is a striking monument of *the Divine goodness*. The goodness of God, like His divine wisdom and power, is seen in the little as well as in the great ; and though, when we think of that goodness, we think of it chiefly in connexion with what is great, it may be seen in the one class of objects as much as in the other. No one will doubt for example that the sun is a striking proof of the divine goodness. It is not too near to scorch us by its heat, nor yet is it too distant to freeze us by the cold, but in the exact position where a Being anxious to promote the happiness of his creatures would have placed it. While, however, that sun is a striking proof of the divine goodness, a leaf, in its own way, is as much so ; and but for the countless numbers of these which exist, and which serve not the purpose merely of barren ornament, but act a most important and useful part in the economy of the world, it is not only doubtful if the world would have been habitable, but it is almost certain that the sun itself would

have been little better than a furnace, scorching, withering, and destroying all within the reach of its fiery beams. It must not be supposed, however, that the leaf is a mere ornament. It is more than an ornament; it is a great sanitary agent; it imbibes during the night, and gives out during the day, certain gases, which go to uphold the delicate proportions of the atmosphere; it operates beneficially on the air which we breathe, and keeps it fresh and pure, as the rivers do the sea into which they pour their collected waters. Without those rivers to stir and replenish it, the ocean would become a stagnant pool, and without the leaves the air would become corrupt, and that which is now the great medium of life would become a medium of death. Let us now see, however, what a leaf teaches us, regarding ourselves.

A leaf often fades *prematurely*, and so does man. While there are leaves which remain attached to the branch from which they spring, until the end of the season allotted for their transient existence, there are multitudes of others which no sooner begin to unfold themselves than

they are nipped by the frost, blighted by the mildew, or swept away by the wind. And what multitudes are there of our own race who no sooner open their eyes on the world, than, as if smitten by an invisible hand, they close them for ever! They no sooner begin to live than they begin to die. In their case there is but a step between the cradle and the coffin. They nestle one day on the warm, fond bosom of a mother, and the next they are consigned to the dust from whence they came. One hour they make "the air musical with their hurst of wild delight," and the next their voices are hushed for ever. As there are multitudes of leaves which disappear almost as soon as they have begun to unfold themselves, so there are multitudes of our race as numerous, who are swept into eternity almost as soon as they are born. What proportion those who thus prematurely disappear bear to those who are permitted to live, it would be difficult to say, but the statement might be hazarded without fear of contradiction, that not more numerous in proportion to its size are the leaves which perish in opening spring, in some extensive forest, than

are the human beings who are cut down by the reaper, Death, just as their powers of mind and of body are beginning to unfold. \*

A leaf begins to fade *when it has reached its highest point of beauty*, and so does man.

It frequently happens that the leaf, after having reached its highest point of vigour, no sooner reaches it than it begins to fade. Looking at it as it hangs, green and glittering on its native bough, it seems to us as though it would hang there until the close of the season which had given it birth, and fall only when stern winter returned to strip the tree on which it hangs of its foliage. That leaf, however, has reached the point assigned as the bound of its short existence. It is to-day bright, fresh, and fragrant—it looks down with pride from the height where it hangs; it seems as vigorous as those which surround it; a frost, however, a killing frost comes, and the leaf, which looked as though it would survive the scorching heats of summer, and blend its tints with the mellow hues of autumn, and even stand the rude shock of winter,

\* See Note L.

falls, and the place which knew it, knows it no more for ever. And how striking an emblem have we in the rapid disappearance of that leaf, of the fate of man, who is cut down often, when, like it, there is every prospect of a continuance of life, and he has reached the highest point of fame, or wealth, or usefulness! You see that merchant! After years of exhausting toil, he has succeeded in amassing vast stores of wealth; he has reached the position which thousands would give all they have to reach; his name commands respect wherever it is mentioned; he is warmly greeted in the market-place, and at the exchange; the architect of his own fortune, he congratulates himself on his success, and says unto the gold, 'Thou art my hope,' and to the fine gold, 'Thou art my confidence.' The scene, however, changes. A hearse with nodding plumes stands at his door. The mourners go about the streets. A coffin, richly mounted, is brought forth. You ask whose it is. It is his who sat but a few days ago at the head of his own table, and told the guests to drink of the sparkling wine, and commanded the daughters of music to lift up

their voices, and drown care and sorrow in mirth and joy. He has faded like a leaf. You see that accomplished statesman. His name was a tower of strength. He never spake, but all who heard him were entranced by his eloquence. When he appeared in the public streets, the multitudes, frantic with delight, echoed and re-echoed his name. Cities felt themselves honoured in extending to him their civic privileges. Medals were struck in honour of his achievements. Triumphant arches were raised, here and there, where he travelled. But the scene changes. A coffin on which are placed the insignia of a man of rank is borne along the streets. Thousands and tens of thousands mingle in the procession. The muffled bells ring out their mournful peals. The coffin is at last placed in the vault assigned to it. The multitudes disperse, and in a few days he whose name was a household word is all but unheard of. He has faded like the leaf, which, after reaching its highest point of efflorescence, droops, dies, and disappears.

A leaf fades *irrevocably*, and so does man. After a leaf has once faded, all attempts to restore



its departed colours are in vain. Those colours, once as fresh and beautiful as those which mingle in the rainbow, have faded for ever, and every effort to restore them is hopeless. In this respect the leaf differs essentially from a tree. "There is a hope of a tree if it be cut down that it will sprout again, and that the tender branches will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet, through the scent of water, it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant." While such is the case with a tree, it is wholly different with a leaf. When once it has faded, it has faded for ever, and to restore even one of the hues which has disappeared is a work which surpasses every effort of human skill. In like manner, when man has once faded, he has faded for ever. No skill can then restore lustre to the eye, hearing to the ear, melody to the tongue, or motion to the heart.

The leaf fades *in all parts* of the world, and so does man.

Wherever a leaf is to be found, there it fades. The law which dooms it to fade is as fixed as

that which causes it to flourish, and whether it be the leaf of the waving palm, which grows in the tropics, or the leaf of the pine, which flourishes on mountain heights, amid the snows of the north, it is doomed to fade, and will fade when the time appointed for its fading comes. Nothing can save it from the operation of that law in virtue of which there is a time to be born and a time to die, a time to flourish and a time to fade. It may grow in a sunny and a sheltered spot; it may be screened from the rude blasts of the North, and the scorching heats of the South. Fade, however, it must, and fade it will; and not only it, but the millions which grow along with it, and clothe with beauty the forests which girdle as with a zone, this mighty globe will fade with it, and of those countless millions which have been there, or may be hanging there at this moment, it is true of each and of all, that they must fade. And as the leaf fades wherever it is found, so does man. He fades in all countries, and under all forms of government. Whether he roam a naked savage in the woods, or form the member of a civilized community, it

is appointed unto all men once to die, and after death the judgment.

A leaf after it fades *moulders into dust*, and so does man.

No sconer has the leaf faded, than it begins to moulder, and returns to the dust from which it sprang. From that dust it derived its beauty and its fragrance, and to that dust it returns when it has served the purpose assigned to it in the economy of nature. And it is thus with man. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return," was the primeval sentence passed on him after he had sinned, and with one or two exceptions has that sentence been carried into effect. Attempts have indeed been made to evade it, but the attempt has failed.\* To see how vigorously it has been enforced, let us enter for a moment the crowded sanctuary of the dead, and, looking into the graves which rise upon all sides of us, see how it has been, and will be carried into effect. There is the grave of a monarch. Scarcely had he ceased to breathe than the embalmers were called in, and with their drugs and

\* See Note M.

spices did what they could to arrest the progress of decay. But has the charm succeeded? Open that coffin and you will see. A handful of dust is all that remains of him who wore a crown and wielded a sceptre. And there is the grave of a courtier. He gave orders that his body should be enclosed in cedar, and laid in a spot where the worm, if possible, should be deprived of its prey. Has his order succeeded? Look into that coffin with its rich mountings, and what do you behold? A handful of dust! And there is the grave of a beggar. He was committed to the grave without a shroud, and in what was scarcely worthy of the name of a coffin. And what do you see there? A handful of dust! Put these handfuls of dust together, and see if you can distinguish them. They are undistinguishable. The dust of kings, courtiers, and beggar, is precisely alike. Each has returned to the earth from which he came. The worm feeds as sweetly on the one as it does on the other. Distinguished from each other as they were during life, there is no distinction now. Even the microscope itself can detect none. Each was a mass of dust when he

lived, and each now that he is dead is only a mass of cold, unconscious dust. "They shall lie down together, and shall not awaken until the Heavens be no more."

Such are some of the thoughts suggested by the fading leaves. Let us add one or two more.

Let the fading leaf teach us our *dependence*. Not more dependent are we on God for all we have, and hope for, than is the leaf on the tree. The leaf depends on the tree for its vital juices, its verdure, its beauty, and whatever vigour it may possess. And, though most unwilling to recognize the fact, we are equally dependent on God. His is the air we breathe, the food we eat, and the raiment wherewith we are clothed. In Him we live, move, and have our being.

Let the fading leaf teach us what a *slight hold we have* of every blessing we possess.

How slight is the hold which the leaf has of the tree! United to it by a delicate fibre, it requires no great force to separate it. Unlike the oak, which before it will fall requires the woodman's axe to be uplifted upon it, and even then falls with reluctance, the leaf is often loosened by

the slightest breeze, lets go its hold, and descends helpless to the earth. As slight a hold have we of health, which may be taken from us, of riches, which may take to themselves wings and fly away, of friends, who may forsake or deceive us, and of life itself, which may be brought prematurely to a close by a grain of sand, a hair, a drop of poison.

Let the fading leaf teach us the duty of *being useful*.

The leaf serves not merely the purpose of ornament. It is useful. It serves a great end, in the economy of nature. It lives not for itself, but for others. From it let us learn, too, that it is our duty to be useful, to shine as lights in the world, to hold forth the word of life, to live for the good of others, and not merely for our own selfish and sordid ends.

Let the fading leaf teach us the necessity of having a *vital union with the Saviour*.

It is to its vital union with the tree that the leaf owes its beauty and vigour. Separated from the tree it droops, withers, and dies. In like

manner it is only by our having a vital union with that Saviour, who is the true vine, that we can bring forth much fruit. Without such a union, we are in the moral universe only what the withered leaves are in the world around us. We are separated from the great source of life, and destined soon to be cast away for ever.

Let the fading leaf teach us to look forward to that world *where decay is unknown*.

There is such a world. As certainly as we live in a world of decay now, there is a world where decay is unknown. No fading leaves are there seen. No winter storm howls there. No grave yawns there. No funeral bell gives out there its solemn peal. All is blooming life—immortal beauty—inconceivable happiness. “They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more, for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shall lead them to fountains of living waters, and God Himself shall wipe all tears from their eyes.” For that world let us habitually prepare, and, if we are so happy as to reach its blessed shores, we shall find that not one leaf

there never fades, but that the Tree of Life which grows on the banks of that river, which is clear as crystal, brings forth its fruits every month, and that its leaves are for the healing of the nations.



## [ VIII. ]

### THE SILENCE OF THE SAVIOUR UNDER HIS SUFFERINGS.

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"Little griefs are garrulous—great ones are dumb."

"Sorrow seems sent for our instruction, as we darken the cages of birds when we would teach them to sing."—JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

It is not easy to keep silence under severe and complicated sufferings. There is something in the very act of communicating our sorrows to another which lightens their pressure, and, on the other hand, when there are none around us to whom we can or dare communicate them, that pressure is more than doubled in amount, and becomes a burden too heavy to be borne. Hence it is that the most eminent servants of God, instead of being able to keep silence when called to pass through severe or protracted suffering, rather, to adopt the striking

image of Hezekiah, mourned like the dove which, when pierced by the fatal shaft, breaks the silence of the night, and the loneliness of the woods, with its plaintive notes. "I did mourn like a dove, mine eyes fail with looking upward. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me."\* Nor was the experience of the king of Judah in this respect at all singular. The Psalmist tells us that when he kept silence, or endeavoured to suppress those emotions of sorrow which were pent up within his soul, his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day. Job, too, we find, in the day of his distress, was so utterly unable to control the tumultuous feelings that arose like a tempest within him, that he broke out into the most intemperate language, and said, "Let the day perish on which I was born." The same weakness betrayed itself in the conduct and language of the Hebrew Lawgiver. Meek and forgiving as he was, he lost on one occasion so completely all self-control, that he was not permitted to enter the land of Promise. Even the Apostle Paul, whose language on all occasions was so

becoming, on one occasion forgot so sadly the dignity of his office, and the example of his divine Master, that he broke out into a strain of violent invective against the High Priest, saying, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall; for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten, contrary to the law?" How different the conduct of the Saviour, under sufferings incomparably more severe than any to which they were subjected! He maintained a dignified and expressive silence. Patient as the sheep which stands meek and uncomplaining while the shearers strip it of its fleece—nay, silent as the lamb which allows itself to be led without a struggle to the place of slaughter, and even when bound with cords and stretched on the fatal board, will sometimes lick the sharp-edged knife which will soon be reeking with its blood—the Son of God bore in mysterious silence the sufferings through which He was doomed to pass.

It is we conceive one of the most striking and significant facts in the history of our Lord, that He should have been able,

under the weight of sufferings so unparalleled in point of severity, to have maintained such a silence. Silence under every kind of suffering is difficult. There is one kind of suffering, however, under which it is more difficult to keep silence than any other, and that is oppression. Of all the forms of human calamity, there is none which so chafes the human soul. Poverty, disease, even death itself, are easy to bear, compared with oppression. There is something in the voice of the oppressor which enters as iron into the soul. There is something in his eye which makes him on whom its lightnings fall, to feel himself a miserable and abject being. There is something in the very nature of oppression, more than any other form of suffering, which causes its victim to writhe under it, as does the worm when trodden upon, and to make his appeal to Divine Justice, and should it fail in that quarter then endeavour to involve himself and those who are oppressing him in common ruin, as Sampson did when he brought down the pillars of the temple of Gaza upon himself and his oppressors.

It is the consideration of these circumstances

which renders the silence of Christ so significant and remarkable. It was not silence under any of the ordinary forms of human calamity. It was not silence under mere misfortune. It was silence under oppression, and oppression of a more flagrant kind than that to which any one had ever been subjected before; oppression, too, which had not one mitigating circumstance connected with it, and which was in such utter violation of the common principles of humanity and justice, that had it not happened by the predetermined counsel of God the very stones would have cried out against it. As it was, the sun hid himself in dismay, while the meek and uncomplaining sufferer gave his back to the smiters, and his cheek to them that plucked off the hair. "Many bulls," says He, "compassed me about; strong bulls of Bashan have beset me. They gaped upon me with their mouths as a raving and a roaring lion. For dogs have compassed me; the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet." In the midst of this scene of outrage and violence, how did He conduct himself? Did He resist? Did he com-

plain? Did he find fault with the dispensations of Heaven? Surrounded with enemies more numerous and blood-thirsty than ever before, hemmed in their victim, he stood calm and firm, and maintained a silence as expressive as that which reigned in the Holy of Holies itself.

Let us consider the silence of Christ under His sufferings, and then endeavour to account for it.

*Christ was silent under His sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane.*

The garden of Gethsemane was the scene of sufferings more varied and acute than has been any single spot of ground on the surface of the world in which we live. It was there that being in agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood. That, however, which invests that spot with so tragic a character is the circumstance that it was the scene of our Saviour's apprehension, and that we may see with what uncomplaining silence he submitted to this act of violence, let us recal to recollection the incidents connected with it. It was Night. Worn out with the toils of the day, and anxious to prepare himself by means of prayer for the events which lay

before him, our Saviour had withdrawn from the city of Jerusalem, and betaken himself to a secluded spot at some distance from its walls. It was a spot singularly fitted for the purpose for which he had chosen it. Thickly planted with trees which flung down their deep shadows, its stillness at this particular hour was broken only by the murmurs of the brook Kedron, the hum of the distant city, and the rustling of the leaves as the night wind stirred them. He throws himself upon the ground, and in the earnestness of the mental struggle in which He is soon engaged, sweats as it were great drops of blood. \* While thus engaged the tramp of restless feet is heard suddenly in the distance. The light of torches gleams through the foliage. The echoes of harsh voices fall upon the ear, and in another moment an armed band, headed by the traitor, is upon him, and there at the hour of midnight and in a lonely spot they rudely seize upon their innocent victim. How did the Saviour meet this unexpected assault upon him? He might, we must admit, if He had pleased, breathed upon that ruffian band, and they

\* See Note N.

would have withered away under his breath as did the fig-tree which grew by the way-side. Awed by His majestic look that band, as we are told, fell backward to the ground, and none can doubt that if He had willed it He could have converted the scene of ignominious capture into one of signal triumph, either by smiting them as the angels did the men of Sodom with blindness, or vanishing suddenly, as we read of Him afterwards doing, from their sight. Did He adopt any of these expedients? Did He attempt to escape? Did He upbraid with His treachery that disciple who had conducted His enemies to this sacred and secluded spot? Did he even ask on what grounds they presumed to arrest Him? So far from assuming a hostile or even a defensive attitude, he silently submitted.

*Christ was silent at the bar of Pilate.*

There is perhaps no kind of suffering so acute and overwhelming as that which a mind, conscious of innocence, experiences, when it hears preferred against it the charge of foul and flagrant crimes. To one conscious of innocence, the very suspicion of guilt is fraught with poignant suffering, and of



all things one of the most difficult is to maintain silence under such suspicions. Let us conceive then, if we can, what must have been the sufferings of Christ from this cause when He found himself placed at the bar of Pilate, and heard the grossest and yet the falsest charges preferred against Him. "We found this fellow," said his accusers, "perverting the nation and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that He himself is Christ a King." Never was a charge more false. Never was an accusation more unfounded. Never could He have had a better opportunity of vindicating His innocence, and of overwhelming His enemies with the most conclusive proofs of it. He might have reminded them that so far from having aimed at political power, he had on one occasion hid himself when the people sought to make Him a King. He could have recalled to their remembrance the occasion when He asked for a Jewish coin, and inculcated from it the duty of subjection to the civil power. He made, however, no attempt either to vindicate himself or to confound his enemies. In the midst of a rabble,

panting like wolves for his blood, in the presence of a governor who carried in his aspect and manner that air of superciliousness for which the functionaries of the Roman State were distinguished; at the dark hour of midnight,—with the certain prospect before Him of a cruel and ignominious death, he maintained unbroken silence. “Answerest thou me nothing?” asked the Roman governor, struck with His silence. But Jesus yet answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled greatly.

*Christ was silent under His sufferings on the Cross.*

Of all the modes of extinguishing life which have been invented by man that of putting an end to it by means of crucifixion is certainly at once the most ingenious and severe.\* The object of this mode of punishment being not so much to extinguish life as to produce suffering, it accomplishes this object as no other method of inflicting death ever did. The great difference between this mode of capital punishment and every other which has been invented, is, that

\* See Note O.

while the object of most of these is to extinguish life with the greatest possible rapidity, the object of this is to extinguish it as slowly as possible, to inflict upon the sufferer as much pain as it is possible for him to endure, and to allow him to die only when he can endure it no longer. It was, let us bear in mind, to a death of this kind that our Lord was doomed, and there is none which was more fitted to exhaust His patience, as well as to cause him to attempt to vindicate His innocence. During the long hours, however, that he hung upon the cross, racked with pain, did He make one solitary attempt to prove that innocence? Did he say "Why am I called to endure this agonising and ignominious death? I have done nothing wrong. Which of you convinceth me of sin?" In circumstances far less trying, Elijah, we read, called down fire from Heaven; "If I be a man of God, let fire come down from Heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty."\* In what a different manner did the Son of God act, when bound to the accursed tree, with cords which a single breath of His would have dissipated into air,

\* 2 Kings, 1 chapter, 10 verse.

and placed in the midst of two robbers, one of whom publicly derided Him, and insulted by a rabble who stood beneath the cross, making His very agonies the subject of their profane merriment! He uttered not one word either in vindication of Himself, or in accusation of his enemies. The sheep when it stands before its shearers, to be stripped of its fleecy burden, does not stand more patiently than He stood. The lamb, when stretched on the sacrificial altar, did not struggle less than he did. "He was dumb, and opened not his mouth."

Let us now endeavour to assign some reasons for this mysterious silence.

Christ was silent under his sufferings because he felt He was the substitute of the guilty, and that *those sufferings were just*. There is nothing which so effectually reconciles the mind to suffering as a conviction that the suffering is deserved. It was a conviction of this kind which made David, when cursed by Shimei, say "The Lord hath bade him curse, let him curse on." A similar conviction caused Job to exclaim, "Behold I am vile, I will put my hand on my mouth."

A conviction, too, of the same kind, reconciled the mind of the Betrayer to the awful doom to which he rushed when he said "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the *innocent blood*." It was a conviction of the same kind operating on the mind of Christ, with a degree of force of which we can form, however, no conception, which caused Him to bear with uncomplaining silence those sufferings through which He passed, and which, but for a sentiment of this kind, would have made Him feel that they were in the highest degree unjust. In one point of view His sufferings were in the highest degree undeserved. He had done no sin. Physically as well as morally he was free from the slightest taint of pollution. Pure as the lamb whose fleece has been washed by the rains of heaven, and which stands before its shearers white as snow, He stood upon the earth as no one ever stood before or since. Regarding him in this point of view it was in the highest degree unjust Christ should suffer, and there never were sufferings more undeserved than those He was called upon to bear. While, however, He was personally free from sin, He was as the substitute

of sinners legally chargeable with it, and stood loaded with an amount of guilt greater than ever met before or can meet again in the person of a transgressor. "He was made sin for us, though he knew no sin ; He was numbered with the transgressors, and bore the sins of many." Occupying the place of a Substitute, the sins of His people met on His head, as the rivers from distant parts of the earth meet in the ocean. For those sins He was held accountable. Those sins He had undertaken to expiate. Such an accumulation of guilt never met before and never can meet again in the person of a single transgressor. The sins of one human being there is reason to believe are all but inconceivable in point of number and aggravation, and when we consider that they are so, it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the sins of a man who reaches the ordinary limit of human life are literally innumerable. "Who can understand his errors?" If the sins of one human being, however, be so great in the aggregate, what must have been the number of the sins which met on the head of

Christ, and for which He was held responsible? There is every reason to believe that the science of numbers, though it enables us to measure the distances of the stars and the magnitude of the heavens, can furnish no figures to represent these, and that, like those heavens themselves, the ocean of human transgressions which swept and surged over the head of the Saviour, had a height, a depth, a length, and a breadth, which passeth all knowledge. Can we wonder then that when Christ was called to bear in His solitary person this accumulated weight of transgression, a weight made up of the sins of men of all ages, and of which ours, small as we sometimes think them, formed component parts, that He should have suffered in silence? The inhabitant of the Alpine valley, when he sees the avalanche which has accumulated for ages on the glittering height above him, at last fall thundering and smoking on the helpless village beneath, is so overwhelmed with horror that he can neither speak nor run, but stands transfixed in unconscious silence, and often perishes on the spot when he sees it. If such are his feelings, what must have been the

feelings of Christ when He saw a weight of divine vengeance—a weight, moreover, He knew that as the substitute of the guilty He deserved to bear descending upon his head? It is impossible for us to conceive what those feelings were, though it is easy to see that combined with the conviction He had of *their justice* they explain the otherwise inexplicable silence He maintained.

Christ was silent under His sufferings because He saw those sufferings would be instrumental in *working out the salvation of multitudes of the human race*. There is nothing which reconciles a man of a benevolent nature to suffering more than the hope or belief that the sufferings through which he is passing, will promote the happiness of others. What was it which enabled the martyr to endure agonies almost beyond the power of human endurance? It was the belief that the flames would not altogether drink up his blood, but that being dead, that blood would still speak. And it was a belief of the same kind which enabled Christ to bear, without a murmur, the sufferings through which He passed. Great as those sufferings were, He felt they were incon-



siderable when put in the balance and weighed, side by side, with the salvation of the innumerable multitudes who were to be brought by them to glory. The salvation of one soul is an object of such magnitude, that probably we do not unduly estimate it when we say that if Christ had achieved only the salvation of one, His sufferings would not have been in vain. If we compute the value of a single soul, either by the happiness it will enjoy, or the misery it will endure, in the course of eternal ages, we must admit that it is incalculable, and that in this point of view, one soul outweighs in value the material universe itself. The happiness which a single soul will experience during the progression of eternal ages, as much exceeds all the happiness which has ever existed, or will exist, in the world, as the heavens exceed in magnitude and extent the world in which we live, and on the other hand, the misery of which one single soul may become conscious during the same period, is such as to exceed the aggregate of all the misery which has existed, or will exist, in this world, and can only be fathomed by the Divine Mind. Such being the case, it will

be no matter of surprise that Christ should have borne with silence suffering which He knew would terminate in the salvation of innumerable multitudes of our race. "A woman," said He on one occasion, "has sorrow because her hour is come, but she remembereth no more her anguish for joy that a man is born into the world." It was the prospect of possessing a joy the same in kind, but infinitely surpassing it in degree, which sustained Him. He saw that the sufferings through which He was about to pass, and which must be endured before He could become the life of the world, would be instrumental in rescuing from eternal misery and elevating to immortal happiness innumerable multitudes of our own fallen race, and hence it was He bore them uncomplainingly.

Christ was silent under His sufferings, because He saw those sufferings *would promote the divine glory*. The promotion of the divine glory was the great object which Christ had in view when He consented to suffer in the room of sinners. "I came not," says He, "to do mine own will, but the will of Him who sent me: herein is my Father *glorified* that ye bear much fruit. I

have *glorified* Thee on earth . . .” and it was the prospect of advancing that glory which induced Him to undergo the sufferings through which He agreed to pass. The salvation of the human race was, indeed, an object which lay near to His heart. The promotion of the divine glory, however, was, if possible, an object which lay still nearer, and it was because He saw that His sufferings would tend to manifest that glory—would develop features in the divine character, which had never been seen before—would show God to “be just and yet the justifier of the ungodly”—that He bore, with uncomplaining silence, sufferings which but for this conviction would have overwhelmed Him with their weight. Nor can we doubt that the sufferings of Christ have manifested the divine glory, in a manner in which it was never manifested before, and with a lustre too, as much superior to that with which it is exhibited in the works of creation and providence, as the lustre of the heavens surpasses that which comes from the glowworm, when it lights its feeble lamp at night. Nor will it be difficult to show how this is. Is the glory of a

sovereign more advanced by the triumphal march of his armies—by the annexation of new and unexplored territories to his empire—by the conquest of savage tribes—by treasures of barbaric pearl and gold which conquest brings along with it, or by the performance of some act of mercy—some deed of kindness which He performs when entering in disguise the cell of the prisoner, He does what He can to reclaim him from habits of intemperance and vice? The single act of mercy which that monarch performs, when, laying aside the insignia of rank and office, he goes into that lonely cell, and gives but a cup of cold water to the hardened felon to drink, throws around him a glory superior to that which would be reflected by all the most brilliant victories won in the conquest of all the nations on the earth. And, in like manner, the glory of the Divine Being will, there can be no doubt, eventually be more fully displayed in consequence of the sufferings of Christ—sufferings borne for the express purpose of saving innumerable multitudes, who otherwise must have

perished—than they could have been in any other way.

In bringing these remarks to a close let us take home to ourselves the great practical lesson they convey. That lesson is that we are Christians only in so far as we possess the meek and quiet spirit which led Christ when He was reviled not to revile again, but to commit Himself to Him who judgeth righteously. There are some, indeed, who consider such a spirit base and abject, who conceive that dignity of character consists rather in resenting evil than overcoming it, and that they cover themselves with more glory when they resist than forgive. Such persons speak of an “honourable pride,” as if any pride could be honourable, and characterise humility as abject, as if that could be abject for which Christ has been highly exalted. Those who think thus have yet to learn that the greatest of all conquerors is he who conquers his own spirit, and that the hero of a hundred battles, if he cannot do this is in reality a child compared with him who can in patience possess his soul.

[ IX. ]

ON THE UNREASONABLENESS OF CHERISHING A  
SENTIMENT OF AVERSION TOWARDS THE SUPREME  
BEING.

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“ He is my bane, I cannot bear him,  
One heaven and earth can never hold us both ;  
As if two suns should meet in one meridian  
And strive in fiery combat for the passage.”

ROWE.

THE existence in the mind of a sentiment of aversion or hatred without a cause is a thing utterly unknown in the intercourse of men with each other. The cause assigned for cherishing enmity towards an individual may not be a good one, but a cause, real or imaginary, almost always exists. An offence of some kind or other has been given, or conceived to have been given. The offending party has perpetrated some act of baseness, spoken some word of unkindness, breathed some whisperings of calumny, or omitted some one or other

of the many courtesies which men living in a conventional state of society expect from each other. It is true that when the mind becomes diseased it often conceives a sentiment of aversion towards one to whom in its better days it turned with feelings of affection, and that sometimes the unnatural spectacle is beheld of a parent disliking the child he caressed—of a child distrusting the parent he once loved, or of a friend looking at the friend whom he regarded as a part of his own soul with sentiments of loathing and dislike. But this is a morbid condition of mind. Aversion in every instance is traceable to a cause, fancied or real, fictitious or true.

To the truth of these remarks there is but one exception and it is a striking one. That exception is in the case of the Divine Being. He alone is the object of our dislike without our having one reason to assign in vindication of it. Let us look at some of the proofs of the existence in the mind of this sentiment of aversion or hostility, and then attempt to show that it is in the highest degree unjust and unreasonable.

Our aversion to think of the Divine Being

*voluntarily*, and for any length of time, indicates the existence of a latent sentiment of aversion. It is not asserted that we *never* think of God. It is impossible to look around, above, beneath, or within, without thinking of Him. We cannot look on those heavens which declare His glory, without thinking of Him. We cannot listen to the tempest rising in its might, and rushing onwards in its fury, without thinking of Him. We cannot look at the ocean reposing in beauty, or lashed into madness—cannot hear the thunderstorm careering in majesty across the heavens—we cannot look on our own bodies, so fearfully and wonderfully made, or contemplate our souls, still more fearfully formed, without thinking of Him. We cannot bend over the face of the dead, and look on that form where an immortal spirit was so lately enshrined, but from which it has been mysteriously withdrawn, without thinking of Him, and feeling there is a Being above us, with whose power it is vain to contend. Such thoughts are, however, involuntary. They do not like our other thoughts—thoughts of business, or pleasure, or those suggested by



any of the multitudinous topics which engage our attention or excite our interest, arise or depart at our bidding. They are the result of laws over which we have no control, and rise up in the minds as involuntarily as the image of the rock, or the tree, or the cloud which is reflected in the stream, rises in its pellucid depths. So little control have we over these thoughts, that even did we wish to exclude them we could not. How few in number, however, are our *voluntary* thoughts of the Divine Being! How seldom do we sit down voluntarily to think of the close and indissoluble relationship we sustain to Him! How soon we find such thoughts become dull and irksome! How glad we are to escape from them! What an intrusion we feel the image of God to be, when it rises suddenly before the mind. How differently do we entertain the thoughts relating to business, pleasures, our every day pursuits—with the manner in which we entertain thoughts having the most remote reference to the Divine Being! And what does this aversion of the mind to pursue this train of thought prove? Does it not prove that we

have a secret dislike to Him? Does it not prove that as the first transgressors, when they heard the voice of the Lord God walking amongst the trees of the garden, hid themselves in its recesses, so, in like manner, we try to conceal ourselves from the fiery glance of a Being whose eye we dread and whose nature we dislike?

A still stronger proof of the existence in the mind of a feeling of aversion towards the Supreme Being is our *opposition to His will*. It will be admitted that the will of God ought to be, to all His intelligent creatures, the great rule of action. That rule is implicitly followed in Heaven, there being amongst its countless hierarchies not one disobedient spirit to be found. Inanimate nature recognizes that Will; "Stormy winds and vapour fulfil His word." As the planets circle round the sun, all things inanimate move around in obedience to that Will.

In two departments of being, and in two alone, so far as we are aware, that will is disputed. One of these is the region of eternal darkness—the other is the world in which we live, and the history of which, from its commencement until

now, has been the history on the part of our race of deep-rooted, continuous, and active opposition to that will.

It will be admitted, however, that if there be a Supreme Being, He has an incontestable right to prescribe to His creatures the course of action they should follow, and that His will should be authoritative. Who possesses such a right as He has to be obeyed? Are we not bound by every tie which can bind the creature to the Creator to acknowledge his authority? Are we not bound by the tie of gratitude, He being that Being who has endowed us with this wondrous sentient existence? Are we not bound by the tie of dependence, dependent as we are on Him for every breath we draw, and every blessing we enjoy? Are we not bound by the tie of love, in return for that great love wherewith he hath loved us? Do not these and other ties bind us as with a triple cord to consult on all occasions the will of that Being with whom we are so closely allied, and to make his will our only and authoritative principle of action? Bound, however, as we are by these ties, what is the fact?

His will we have not only frequently, but flagrantly violated. We have preferred our own will to the will of God. God spake to us in our childhood, but we refused to hear him. God spake to us in manhood but we refused to listen. He has spoken to us since, by means of stern and solemn teachers, by many a sick bed, and many a death-bed, and many a grave. He has stripped us of that to which life owed many of its charms. He has covered our homes with sackcloth, and caused us to feel that of home little more but the name is left. And why all this painful discipline? Why so many varied expedients? To bring our will into a state of harmony with His own—to make us humble and obedient—to teach us to say, “Not my will, but thine be done.” And have they had this effect? Far from it. Our will is in too many instances still as unbroken as that of the fiery steed of the desert.

Another proof of our aversion to the Divine Being, is our unwillingness to fall in with the plan he has developed for reconciling the world to Himself. When hatred to an individual exists in the heart, it extends to almost

everything connected with him. It extends more particularly to that to which He attaches peculiar and pre-eminent importance, and if, amongst other things, he has formed a plan which he is anxious to see carried out, that plan is sure to meet with the most determined opposition, on the ground of its being new, or unsuitable, or fanciful. In short, the hatred directed at first against the individual is extended to all in which he is supposed to feel interested, and his plan meets with undisguised and active opposition. Let us apply this illustration to the point before us. There is a plan which peculiarly and pre-eminently belongs to God. On that plan He has expended the resources of boundless wisdom. That plan was arranged by Him as to its minutest parts before time began its course. Patriarchs, when they saw it in dim outline, rejoiced and were glad. Prophets descanted in glowing measures on its grandeur. Martyrs sealed their testimony to its efficacy with their blood. Such is the plan. How have we received it? Have we cordially concurred in it? Have we embraced it with eagerness?

Have we seen it to be the only one suited to our condition? Have we given up every plan of our own, and taken a firm hold of it? Or is it not the case that we have thought little about it, have felt little need of it, have never in good earnest embraced it, and that while God is deeply interested in its success, and Christ travelled from Heaven in the greatness of his strength to execute it, and the Spirit of God waits to apply it, and angels rejoice when they see a single instance of its success, we are as unconcerned as if no such plan had ever been formed in the councils of Eternity, and as if it were a matter of indifference what became of God's plans, so long as we could carry out our own? What more decisive proof than this could there be, that there is in the heart a lurking sentiment of dislike towards the originator of the plan itself? In opposition to what has been stated it may be said that if there were in the heart any such feeling of enmity to the Divine Being, we should be conscious of it.

In reply to this, it may be remarked, that there are many principles in our nature, of whose

existence we are not at all conscious, until circumstances develope them. The strength of the feeling of animosity to an individual depends on the nearness or the distance of the parties opposed to each other. If two individuals cherishing a sentiment of dislike towards each other live in close proximity, the sentiment will be strong and active; while, if they live at some little distance, it will be feeble and inert. Let them be separated from each other by some intervening continent, and the feeling will, by the mere effect of distance alone, die away. Now, somewhat similar to this is our position with reference to God. Were God nearer to us, could we see him daily and hourly, crossing our path, did He call us to account at the close of each day for what we had done, did we see Him frowning upon us when we did evil, then, constituted as we are, the sentiment of hatred would rise into active opposition. God is to us however so distant; He appears to us to have so little to do with this world, that we are no more conscious of dislike towards Him than we are of dislike towards an individual with whom we

differed many years ago, and who has removed to a distant part of the world. In the one case we infer that because the feeling of hatred is dormant, it is dead ; in the other, that because it has not been roused into action by the presence of its object, it has no existence. Both conclusions are, however, false. In each instance the feeling of hatred lies coiled up like a serpent in the breast, and requires but the presence of its appropriate object to make it rise and develope its strength.

Let us now see how unreasonable, as well as unjust is this sentiment of aversion.

There is no just ground of dislike towards the Divine Being in *His character*. Sometimes the character of an individual is the cause of our cherishing a sentiment of dislike towards him. Where there is pride, or selfishness, or sensuality, or envy, or any other of the dark and malignant passions, forming a preponderating element in the character, it uniformly awakens in the mind, either a sentiment of pity or of dislike, and it is only right that society should in this way express its



disapprobation of vices, which, were they generally indulged, would lead to a disorganization of its framework. No such ground of dislike, however, can be found in the character of the Divine Being. His character includes every conceivable element of excellence. It is made up of virtues so transcendently lovely, that even when they are faintly reflected in ourselves, and seen shaded by numerous imperfections, they throw a glory around our fallen nature. To our distorted vision, indeed, some of those excellencies may wear a stern and forbidding aspect, but that appearance is owing more to the point of observation from which we view them, and the obscured and lurid light in which we see them, than to any inherent quality. In themselves they are infinitely attractive, and appear stern to us only; as the face of the judge, who in the bosom of his family is all affection and tenderness, appears stern to the criminal who stands at his bar. But let us look at that character more in detail—at some of its separate and distinctive features, and then say, if he

who entertains towards the Being to whom it belongs a sentiment of dislike is not chargeable with doing so without a reasonable cause.

Justice is one of its features. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Is that a ground of enmity? Holiness is another of its features. Benevolence is another of its features—"Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. . ." Compassion or Pity is another of its features—"As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," etc. These are some of the most prominent features of the divine character. These are some of the precious stones in that crown of uncreated glory, which belongs to Him. These are some of the scattered rays, whose radiance, mingling and meeting in the divine character, render it the "perfection of beauty." And is there anything in any one of those features of character, taken singly, or collectively, fitted to create a sentiment of dislike? Should boundless love create it? Should unsearchable wisdom create it? Should unfathomable tenderness create it? When we see these features of excellence even

faintly distinguishing human character, we seldom fail to accord to them the due meed of praise. We admire the sternness of that virtue which can trample on sordid gold, and scorn the proffered bribe. We admire the warmth of that benevolence which, bidding farewell to the comforts of civilized life, can spend its days in the wards of hospitals, and devote its nights to devising a remedy for the wretchedness of its inmates. We admire the depth of that compassion, which taking its rise in the heart will lead its possessor to have recourse to means the most costly and self-denying, for the relief of suffering humanity. We admire these and other features of character.

These, however, in an infinitely higher degree, and purified from every element of alloy, are the features of the divine character. To the Divine Being they originally belong. From Him they derive their existence. In Him, as their great centre, they eternally reside. Whence then originates our dislike of a Being distinguished by such excellencies? Is it not unjust? Is it not unreasonable? Is it not as unwarrantable as the dislike of the child, who, in a paroxysm of childish

fury, chides the parent who loves him, and strikes a blow at the heart that would pour out its life blood, if it were necessary, on his behalf? There is no just ground for the dislike of the Divine Being *in the laws of His moral government*. To determine the character of a law, it is only necessary to look at its tendency to promote the happiness of those to whom it has been given. It is in this way we estimate the character of a human law. If that law has a tendency to repress vice, and to encourage virtue, we say the law is good, and that there is no ground of objection to it. The test which we apply to human law is equally applicable to divine. Let us apply that test. We do not here enter on the question, whether that should or should not be law. The state of those parts of the world where the restraints of law are unknown, and where popular caprice and violence have full sway, may give us some idea, though a faint one, of what the state of the universe would be without law. We confine ourselves to the question, "Are the laws which God has appointed for the government of His creatures good or bad?" and we are willing that

the issue of the question should depend on its being shown that they have an evil or a good tendency—a tendency to insure the happiness or misery of those to whom they have been given. Let us take, then, any one of the laws which the Divine Being has appointed and estimate it in this way. Take the very first which stands at the head of the decalogue—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." What is the tendency of that law? Has not the violation of it been the cause of a large part of the misery and crime with which the world has been overspread? Whence the many gods with which fancy has peopled the world? Whence the practice of self-immolation? Whence the fires of Suttee? Whence the fabled virtue of sacred streams? Whence the conception that the Divine Being is altogether such an one as ourselves, and requires to be propitiated by the sighs and the tears and the blood of His offended offspring? And whence the sense of guilt and terror with which we are haunted when we think of God? All these are the effects of the violation of that law.

Let us now look at the results which would

accrue to the world at large, and to ourselves individually, were that first and great commandment but carried out. Were God universally loved, the whole moral aspect of the world would be changed. Superstition like a bird of Night would return to the gloomy cavern from whence it came. Idolatry would cease. Idols would be unknown. The Sabbath bell would be heard echoing in valleys that have only hitherto reverberated with the cries of frantic devotees. The Preacher of the Cross would take the place of the deceived and deceiving apostles of a false creed. The spires of Christian temples pointing to heaven would everywhere catch the first rays of the rising and the last of the setting sun, and crowded with worshippers the love of God would beat in every pulse and sparkle in every eye. The world, in one word, would become a second Eden, and Paradise would be restored.

Let us take another law which God has appointed and estimate it by the same test, that law which requires us to do to others what in the same circumstances we would have them to do to us. Is not the violation of that law the cause of

all the animosities which have hitherto disturbed the world? Whence the feuds which embitter the peace of families? Whence the unprincipled competitions of modern commerce? Whence the invasion of private and personal rights? Whence the tampering with a neighbour's reputation? Whence the attempt to build up our own character on the ruins of the character of another? Whence the heart-burnings and the rivalries and the strifes with which our ears are daily assailed, and our hearts are daily sickened? Whence do they spring but from the violation of this simple law? And, were that law obeyed, what would be the result? Precisely opposite of what we have described. Peace on earth and goodwill to man would everywhere prevail. Selfishness would be torn up by the roots, families would live on terms of friendly intercourse with each other, kindness would take the place of hollow courtesy, men would regard each other as brothers, the human heart, relieved from the ligatures with which false creeds and conventional systems have hitherto impeded its action, would beat strong and free, and as a consequence affec-

tions that are now all but dead would be re-awakened, and a warmth and a glow and an exhilaration of feeling to which we are at present strangers, and analagous to that which takes place in the body when the progress of disease is arrested by the restoration of health, would return. Such would be the effects of the observance of the laws to which we have referred.

By these effects we are willing that the law should be tested. Are these effects then good or bad? Are they such as should be deprecated or desired? Would they make men happier or more miserable? Happier there can be no doubt. Why then dislike the Being who appointed those laws? If the laws be good, must not the Lawgiver partake of their goodness? Is not aversion to Him unreasonable? Is it not in the highest degree criminal? To admire the law, and yet to dislike the Lawgiver, is there not an obvious and palpable incongruity, and to all chargeable with this inconsistency may not He say, "They have hated Me without a cause?"

There is no just cause for dislike towards the Supreme Being in the restorative means He has em-




ployed for bringing back His alienated creatures to Himself.\* On this point there is no necessity for enlarging. Whether God should employ any means to restore man to the position he has forfeited, and what those means should be, are questions which He alone has a right to determine. Having, however, employed means, it is competent for us to inquire if those means are wise and good, and, moreover, if they afford any reasonable grounds for our cherishing enmity to the Being who devised them. To settle this point only one question is necessary, and it is this—"Are they fitted to promote the glory of God and the happiness of man?" That they are fitted to promote both of these great ends, none will doubt. Let us look first at the glory of God. More of that glory is seen in the plan of human redemption than in the whole material universe. In that universe we grant it is everywhere to be seen. We see it in the rising and the setting sun, in the heavens with their spangled magnificence, in the ocean with its wild waste of waters, in every rock and tree and flower with which the surface of the world has been adorned? Do these objects,

\* See Note P.

however, display to their full extent the glory of the Divine Being? They give us a mere dim outline of it, they admit us to a distant and momentary glimpse, they tell us of boundless power, unerring wisdom, and undeserved goodness; but they say nothing of truth, mercy, justice, and compassion. To see the glory of these attributes we must look at the restorative means the Divine Being has employed for the redemption of His creatures, and in those means we have a brighter display of the glory of God than we could have had could we have seen at one glance all the suns which light up the universe above us, mingling their collected rays in one focus and pouring them down in a broad and overflowing flood of splendour on the world. For in these we see combined the glory of the divine mercy—mercy triumphing over judgment; the glory of the Divine Justice; Justice sparing not his own Son—the glory of the Divine Love—selecting as its objects the vilest and most polluted—the glory of the Divine Wisdom. Wisdom selecting means which no finite intelligence could have devised, much less have carried into execution. But let us now look at the tendency of those means to

promote the happiness of man. From what does the misery of man proceed? The misery of man arises from his guilt, and provision is made in those means for the removal of that guilt. The misery of man arises from the depravity of his nature, and a remedy is provided for that depravity. The misery of man arises from his being doomed to die, and means are provided by which death itself shall die. What means, therefore, could have been employed so strikingly illustrative of the Divine Wisdom and goodness? How little is there in such means to excite enmity, or, rather, how much is there in them to excite love? “What more could He have done to His vineyard than He has done?” What other means could He have tried? Can we suggest any? And at all events do not the means He has tried, so costly, so simple, yet so effectual, show that His heart must have been set on our salvation; that unless it had been so set a remedy suitable to the crisis never could have been devised, and that, if after such a display of affection for us, we have no affection towards Him, but in its stead a feeling of enmity and dislike, we are in a state



of the greatest conceivable depravity and estrangement?

These observations may be brought appropriately to a close by our recalling to our recollection that great truth which it is the object of the scheme of human redemption to enforce, viz., that there is but one way in which the enmity of the human heart can be overcome, and that it is by bringing it under the influence of the fact that though we dislike God, God loves us. No other means will avail to the subjugation of that carnal mind which is enmity against God. With the view of subduing that enmity, we may expatiate on the goodness of God in giving us existence, in conferring upon us an intellectual nature, in bestowing upon us so many privileges, in lighting up within us a soul which will never die. With the same view we may picture to ourselves His goodness in having placed us in a world so richly furnished and fitted to be our dwelling place, in having suspended over us the radiant sky, and placed beneath our feet a verdure which is ever renewed. All, however, will fail. From such demonstrations the heart will turn

cold and sickly away. They will fall upon it as strains of music on the dull cold ear of death. In order that our aversion to the Divine Being may be removed, we must have recourse to another plan, and try another process, and that process is trying habitually to realize that God, not only loved, *but still loves us*. In no other way shall we succeed. If we employ, however, this simple instrumentality, the enmity of the heart will at once give way. Believing that God loves us, we shall love Him. Love will beget love. Let us endeavour then to realize that God loves us. Let us regard it as a fact as stable as any of those with which we are acquainted, that that Being whom we are accustomed to clothe with attributes of terror, moved by the guilt and wretchedness of our condition, devised means for our deliverance. Let us regard it as a fact that He gave up His Son to the death for us all; that it pleased Him to bruise Him and put Him to grief; that He exacted from Him the obedience we should have rendered, that He inflicted upon Him the penalty we should have borne, and that now, in consequence of the sufferings endured, and the

righteousness wrought out by that Substitute, God stands in the attitude of a loving Father, and longs to welcome us to His paternal embrace. Let us realize this, and then say if the enmity of our heart should not give way. But should that enmity still remain, there is another way of meeting it. There is a sight which has never failed, when realized, to disarm the enmity of the human heart. That sight is, the sight of the Son of God himself, bearing our sins on the cross. Go to that cross; look upon the Saviour bruised for thine iniquities—nailed to the accursed tree, numbered with transgressors, bowing His head, and giving up the ghost. Look on the incarnate Son, agonizing, bleeding, dying for thee, and then say if it is not in the highest degree unreasonable that we should cherish a sentiment of aversion towards One whose love for us, has “a height, a depth, a breadth, and a length which passeth all knowledge.”

[ X. ]

ON FORGETFULNESS OF THE DIVINE PRESENCE,  
AND THE MEANS OF COUNTERACTING IT.

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"He is God! the great, the mighty, the tremendous,  
The merciful, the gracious, the benign,  
The wise, the faithful, the just, and the virtuous.  
Omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence are His alone  
Whose being knew no beginning, and can know no end!"  
THE MISHNA TORAH.

It is related that a young man, after ascending one of the highest mountains in Switzerland, and looking around on the scene of magnificence which extended itself on all sides, had the presumption, on being asked to enrol his name in a volume kept for the reception of the names of visitors, to call himself an Atheist. It will naturally occur to us that he who could assume to himself such a name, while surrounded with evidences so overwhelming of the existence of a Supreme Power, must have been distinguished

as much for the obtuseness of his understanding as the insensibility of his heart. Insensible, at all events, he must have been, to look on the heavens above him, refulgent with the splendour of the rising sun—on the mountains towering on all sides of him in rugged grandeur—on the glorious panorama of lake, forest, river, ravine, which lay beneath, bathed in the new-born light; to look on himself, the only living being in that region of solitude and silence capable of contemplating the wonders around him with an intelligent eye—to look on all these proofs of the existence of a Supreme Power, and then to go and write that he believed in none, what was this but an act of inconceivable folly and daring presumption? And yet in condemning this act of folly, are we not condemning ourselves? Are we not surrounded with as great, if not greater proofs of the existence of a Supreme Being, than he was? These bodies which we carry about with us, and which are so fearfully and wonderfully made, do they not tell us there is a God? These souls, still more fearfully and wonderfully formed, do they not tell us there is a God? Con-



science pointing to a judgment yet to come, as constantly and faithfully as the magnetic needle points to the north, does it not whisper to us, again and again, in the most solemn accents, that there is a God? And yet, though surrounded with all these evidences of the existence of a Supreme Power, is it not true that we habitually forget Him? Is it not true that many forget Him as much as if He did not exist? Is it not true that the image of God is one of those we most carefully exclude from our minds? Are we not, in point of fact, proclaiming, if not in written language, at least by the language of our lives, our actions, our conversation, our thoughts, that we do not realize habitually, the existence of a Great First Cause.

This forgetfulness of the Divine Being displays itself in various ways.

It displays itself in first of all an unwillingness to hold intercourse with Him *by means of prayer*. Prayer is an act of intercourse between the creature and the Creator. It is that by which the soul makes known its wants, its hopes, its fears, its desires, to the Being who made it. It

is as real a mode of communication between the spirit of man and the Father of spirits, as written correspondence is a medium of communication between a child and the parent from whom he is separated by the intervening ocean; and just as we should say that the child who never availed himself of that mode of communication, or who availed himself of it only at distant intervals, forgot in a great measure the parent he was bound to revere and love; so in like manner if we neglect prayer, we are chargeable with forgetfulness of God. And while such is really and truly the nature of prayer, how numerous and powerful are the motives which should constrain us to engage in it! We are guilty, and that guilt which we bring with us into the world, and which increases in magnitude every moment, calls upon us to pray. We are ignorant, and that ignorance of God, of ourselves, of all that it most concerns us to know, which we cannot but feel pressing upon us calls on us, to pray. We are exposed to innumerable dangers, and all of these, whether fanciful or real, near or remote, call on us to pray. We are full of wants, and

each of these tells us to spread them before the only Being in the universe, who alone can supply them. We are immortal, hastening to an immortality of bliss or of woe, and that sense of immortality which makes us at times awful to ourselves, calls upon us, to go to Him who alone can help us in this great crisis of our being. All these are reasons for prayer. All these are so many arguments for calling upon God ; all these say to us, "Call upon thy God, that thou perish not." What then shall be said of those, who, disregarding these and other obligations to prayer, never engage in this exercise, rise in the morning refreshed with the repose of the night, but never thank God for that repose—return to their homes at eventide, delivered from the many dangers that have surrounded them during the day, but never thank God for their deliverance ; commit themselves to slumber during the hours of darkness, but never ask God to protect them ; sit down to the abundant and cheerful meal, but never ask God to bless it ; assemble with their children at the domestic hearth, but never summon them to meet round the domestic altar ?

Of all such it must be said, that there is as little vital connexion between the Divine Being and their souls as there is between the limb which has become benumbed with paralysis and the other organs of the body that retain their vitality and vigour.

This forgetfulness of God displays itself also in a reluctance to *form the plans and purposes of life with a reference to His will*. Every reflective mind will admit that it must be necessary to the safety and happiness of all His creatures, that they should follow His will and not their own. The will of God being regulated by infinite wisdom and boundless love, it must be infinitely safer for us to follow it than our own, just as it is far safer for a child to follow the will of a judicious and affectionate parent, than to follow his own blind, undisciplined, capricious will. How unsafe would it be for any child to follow the impulses of his own will! That will would lead him into a thousand dangers. Following it, he would drink the poison when its rich colour, or fragrant odour, attracted his notice, or rush over the precipice in search of the flowers he saw

growing on its brink. Now, as the will of a child would be for him a most unsafe rule of action, so in like manner is our will; and it is the purpose of God that our will should be brought into harmony with His, so that there shall be in the universe but one Central, Supreme, Sovereign Will, the wills of each and all of His creatures moving in harmony around it as attendant satellites move round their suns. To produce this subordination of will in us is the great object which God has in view in afflicting us. He afflicts us in order that He may show us how weak, and wavering, and dangerous a guide of action our own will would be. He has the same object in view in communicating to us the influences of His grace. These influences are designed to bring the human will into harmony with the Divine, and to enable us to say, "Not my will, but thine be done." In one word, the great object which God has in view in the restorative economy He has established, is that His will should have the ascendancy it once possessed, that to him every knee should bow, that before Him all created beings should bend

in an attitude of deepest reverence and love. Such being the divine purpose, it is obvious that if we form our plans and purposes in life, without a reference to His will, we are chargeable with the guilt of forgetting Him. To refute this charge it is not enough that we say that we acknowledge His existence or we reverence His authority.

The child who was sent by a father to a distant part of the world, for the purpose of receiving an education suitable to his position and prospects in life, and was told by that father to form no plan of life without first consulting him ; and who in the face of this command formed some important plan, without even once communicating with him, would be chargeable with forgetfulness of the relation which subsisted between himself and his parent. It would not be enough for him to say in self-defence, " I imagined the plan of life I had formed would be such as my father would approve of ; or, it was my wish to have consulted him, but I was prevented by circumstances, or the distance between us was an obstacle in the way."

These attempts at self-vindication, so far from

extenuating, would only aggravate the guilt, and render more apparent the ingratitude of that child. Precisely similar to this is our position, if we form our plans in life without a reference to the will of God. In doing so, we show a preference for our own will to the divine will. We arrogate to ourselves the prerogative of acting as we think fit. We forget our position of inferiority and dependence. We do what we can to dethrone the Divine Being. We say in action, if not in words, "I prefer following my own will to the will of the Supreme. It is a safer guide. It is a better rule of action." In one word, we are guilty of forgetting God in a matter when God is, above all, specially desirous He should be acknowledged.

But this forgetfulness of God displays itself in a *partial or complete unconsciousness of His presence*. The presence of God surrounds us everywhere. In the language of an ancient sage, the centre of that presence is everywhere, its circumference is nowhere. He looks upon us equally in the crowded city and the secluded hamlet, in the shadowy forest and the silent shore. Now if

the presence of God surrounds us everywhere, should we not be awed, solemnised, impressed by it? And if it has no such influence on our conduct, and does not inspire us with lofty views, and suggest noble sentiments, and prompt devout desires, does it not show that we are to a great extent unconscious of it, or at all events do not sufficiently realize it?

We are all aware how much the mind is impressed by the presence of a man distinguished for lofty intelligence and distinguished rank. How deeply we feel our own inferiority in the presence of a man of high social position, and how sensitively alive we become to a sense of our ignorance in the presence of a man of vast and varied acquirements. And if we are so much affected by the presence of men of like passions with ourselves, what should be the effect of the divine presence on our minds? To forget so far the presence of an earthly sovereign, or to do anything in his presence inconsistent with the respect due to his rank, would be considered an offence of no light kind, and yet what is forgetfulness of the presence of such a sovereign, con-



pared with forgetfulness of the presence of the Most High? The presence of every other being is attended with as few and feeble intimations of its reality as the glowworm gives of its existence. The presence of the Divine Being casts its shadow over the universe, as the gigantic mountain ranges in some parts of the world are said to darken with their shadows a great portion of the continent to which they belong.

II. Let us now consider how this habit of forgetting God may be counteracted.

If we would not forget God, let us seek to realize *how great He is*. The mind is so formed as to be affected by greatness of all kinds, intellectual, moral, and material. Anyone who stands on the sea-shore, and looks upon the ocean lying in unruffled beauty, or lashed into tempest, is conscious of the effect of material greatness on his mind. If material greatness thus affects the mind, how should the greatness of the Divine Being affect it, and more particularly when it is considered that that greatness is "unsearchable." Let us think of the greatness of His power. His power called into existence the world in which we live—

garnished the heavens, put in motion the innumerable worlds that roll on high, created and upholds us. All the display of power we see around us, whether excited by animate or inanimate agents, is feebleness itself when compared with it. Let us think of the greatness of His wisdom. His wisdom is such that magnitude cannot baffle it, and minuteness cannot escape it. He sees the end from the beginning ; He knows the most secret thoughts and feelings of our hearts ; He has arranged all the events of our history, the hour of our birth and the time of our death. He has arranged in like manner the events that will mark the lives of innumerable other moral and responsible agents, that exist in other departments of the universe. But let us think of the greatness of His empire. That empire is over all. The world in which we live is but an insignificant part of it, and would scarcely be missed if blotted out from the heavens.

If we would not forget God let us consider how *near He is*. We are influenced by objects in proportion to their distance or nearness. What

is distant affects us slightly. We are more affected by the sight of a house in flames when it is near to us and we can see it, than we are by the intelligence that a city at a distance, with hundreds of inhabitants, has been engulfed by an earthquake. Now, if we are affected by objects in proportion to their nearness, how much should the presence of God affect us! He is nearer to us than the air we breathe or the light which plays around us. He is nearer to us than are our bodies to our souls. He is so near that He is the soul of our soul, and the life of our life. From Him we receive every breath we draw. Every pulse that beats derives its energy from Him. The mysterious play of the mechanism of life is kept so completely in motion by Him, that were He to withdraw that vital influence which upholds it, it would soon and suddenly cease. If then we would not forget Him, let us remember how *near* He is to us at all times. Let us not suppose He is at a distance. Let us not think with the followers of Baal that He is asleep, or gone on a journey, but realize in all places, and on all

occasions, that He is at our right hand, and that in Him we live, move, and have our being.

If we would not forget God, let us consider how *greatly He has loved, and still loves us*. The mind turns with aversion from an object that is cold, stern, repulsive. It fosters, however, at once on one that is attractive and beautiful, as the bright-winged insect fastens on a flower, and drinks its hidden nectar. Now this is another and a stronger reason why we should not forget God. Were God a stern, harsh, inexorable Being ; did He sit on a throne of vengeance, and wield a septre of wrath ; were His eye lit up with vindictive fire and His countenance shrouded with clouds of wrath ; we might be afraid to remember Him, and there might be some excuse for our forgetting Him. The very reverse, however, of this is the case. He whom we forget has loved us with an everlasting love. Long before we entered on existence, He loved us, and formed a plan for our redemption. He loved us so deeply that He sent His own son to die for us. And so far from being exhausted, His love is as warm, fresh, strong

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the sight of God be, when, after being hidden from us during the whole of a long and inconsiderate life, He manifests Himself! for the first and last time to the awakened spirit.

## [ XI. ]


### THE SPIRITUAL FUNCTION OF NATURE.

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"I could spend whole days and moonlight nights, in feeding upon a lovely prospect. My eyes drink the rivers as they flow. If every human being upon earth could think for one quarter of an hour as I have done for many years, there might, perhaps, be many miserable men among them, but not an unawakened one, from the Arctic to the Antarctic Circle."—COWPER.

WHAT is the relation which materialism, as it exists around us, bears to life? What are its uses? Has it any? And what are they? This is a point of primary importance, seeing that matter presses upon spirit at all points, and influences it in every variety of way.

To understand aright the function of matter, or the office it has to discharge in relation to spirit, we must bear with us in recollection, that it is altogether subordinate to the spiritual. In all its shapes, it exists for the purpose of ministering to spirit.



From Spirit it came, and for spirit it exists. All those forms of grace and grandeur into which it has been thrown, and in which it presents itself to our notice—the rugged mountain—the vast ocean—the glancing sunbeam—the liquid starlight—the pearly dew-drop—the ever-changing rainbow—all these, and the other forms in which matter presents itself to us, existed in spirit in the form of conception previously to their being wrought out into visible embodiment in the scenes around us. And as from Spirit it came, so for spirit it exists. This is its mission. It has no other office. It has no ulterior destiny. To develop spirit—to educe its latent energies—to call into action powers which, until struck and stimulated by outward objects, would remain torpid, as fire does in flint—is one of the great purposes which is intended to be secured by the existence of the material world. The universe itself is but a spangled robe, made for the use of spirit. Or, speaking more properly, it is a school in which spirit is placed, to listen to the lessons of that Great Teacher, who addresses us not in words, but by means of those symbols which




surround us on all sides, and through which, as through the pipes of an organ, the utterances of a Divine voice are ever falling on our ear. From those symbols, little as we think it, we have already derived a most important and influential proportion of our knowledge. We have learned as much, if not more, from material objects, than we have done from all other sources. Could we at all events be deprived of the knowledge we have derived from this source, and which is the result of that constant course of induction in which we spent the first years of existence, it would not be saying too much to affirm, that we should thereby lose the most important and vital part of our information. The education of a child does not *begin*, as is sometimes imagined, when he is placed under a human teacher. The child is taken to task by nature long before he is set to learn by man. Nature is his first and his best Instructress. Long before men around him can find access to his spirit by means of spoken language, she addresses him in language which there is no danger of his misinterpreting, and in tones sweeter, and at the same time more powerful, than any which

come to him from the human voice. Through that eye of childhood, so dreamy-looking and dim-like, the soul is already taking lessons from the sun, and learning from his rays to estimate aright the magnitude, colour, and shape of surrounding objects. Through that ear, so finely attuned, and more perfect in its structure than the most complete acoustic instrument, the soul is already taking lessons from the human voice, and treasuring up its tones of truth and tenderness—from the rushing wind, and learning from it the power of the great forces of nature—from the whispering breeze, and learning, that while nature is the mightiest, she is at the same time the gentlest of all instructors. And through another of those avenues of communication between the mind within and the world without the soul is learning, by means of the odours which breathe upon it, at one time from the grove, with its aromatic fragrance, and at another from the orchard, with its golden fruitage, or profusion of white and crimson blossoms, that it has not come into a world bleak and poorly furnished, but one rich in all the elements of gladness, and where

all things wait upon spirit. All things act and re-act on the spirit of that child. An influence as subtle as the *odylic* influence, with which some suppose the universe to be filled, goes forth from every object, and penetrates and saturates its inner being. Every time the sun rises, his beams leave on its spirit a tinge richer and deeper than any with which he paints the earth and heavens. Every time the moon looks down on it, she mirrors herself in its soul more clearly than she does in the calm ocean or limpid lake. Every time evening, like "an Ethiop bride," comes forth from her bower of clouds, hung with jewels, she awakens in its soul, by means of her silence and her shadows, imaginings brighter and more lasting than any of those watch-fires she kindles in the heavens. Not a star shines, but it ministers to it; not a breeze blows, but it waits upon it; not a season comes round, but it comes to do for it a kind office. All things are its teachers. The sun, moon, stars, exist for it as much as if it alone existed. And while all things teach that child, is he not ever learning? Is not childhood, from its commencement, and through all its

stages, a course of ceaseless experimenting on outward and material objects? From the time the child receives his coral necklace, until the time he throws aside his leathern "satchel," is he not constantly engaged in a series of experiments on all objects around him, and gathering materials out of which his future and more ripened knowledge is to be elaborated? The picture-book which he tears to pieces in the nursery, and on whose fragments he stamps his angry foot, does it not teach him, in its mangled state, properties of matter he never knew before? The paper kite whose motion he watches with such interest, as it hovers over his head, what is it but an instrument by means of which he is learning the nature and qualities of the air on which it floats; and, when so engaged, is he not experimenting as truly as did Franklin, when, by means of the same childish toy, he drew the lightning from the clouds? The air-bubbles which he forms with such pleasure, and throws with such dexterity from the tube of his pipe, what is he doing, when watching the spherical forms into which they arrange themselves, but

preparing himself to understand more clearly hereafter that law of gravitation, which, while it regulates the motion and rounds the forms of the planets in their spheres, at the same time determines the shape and graduates the fall of every tear which trembles in the eyes? And when, along with his companions, he plays at football on the village green, what is he doing but learning from the pastime some of those lessons in regard to power and the composition of forces which may be of use to him in after life? And even when, in the formation of some childish toy, he cuts his finger, and sees for the first time, with mingled horror and surprise, the blood come from it, what is the pain which he experiences on such an occasion, but a salutary lesson taught him, and which he is not likely to forget, as to the necessity of using greater caution and care in the time to come? As it is in his experience, it has been in ours. Every object in the world around us has been teaching us. From all have streamed influences which have made us individually what we are. Not more certainly does water holding in solution particles of iron give a



dark tinge to the soil over which it runs, than the scenes, objects, events, and minutest circumstances of life, have left their hue on our spirits. The winter fire around which we sat in childhood, and in whose glowing embers we imagined we saw towering castles and mail-clad knights—the toy which was put into our hands, and the handling of which first awoke within us the consciousness of will—the clock, on whose antique face we looked with such interest, and whose moving hands carried with them so much mystery—the weather-glass, which pointed out by its silvery column and graduated lines the variations of the atmosphere, and on which we look at last as a sort of household prophet—the mill, situated so romantically in the glen, and the sound of whose grating axle and glowing waters has not yet died away—the woods, to which we repaired in the summer solstice to gather nuts, or enjoy the delicious shade—the pool of water, in which we bathed during the fervid noontide, and whose shell-encrusted bottom made it often appear to our childish fancy a fairy grotto, or fit dwelling for the Naiads—each and all of these objects have

given their peculiar tinge to our souls, and helped to make us what we are.

"So build we up the being that we are :  
Thus drinking in the soul of things,  
We shall be wise perforce."

And these influences, so far from having ceased to act upon us, are acting still, and gently but irresistibly moulding our nature. Unconscious of it though we be, there is not a single aspect of the world without which does not continue to reflect itself in our minds. As truly as the heavens reflect themselves in water when it is untroubled, producing in its depths a firmament tinted with the same azure, and filled with the same stars as those which glitter in the expanse above, so in like manner all the objects and scenes around us reflect themselves in our consciousness. Nor does this remark apply only to such objects as are great and imposing. It extends to the humblest and most familiar. It is not only the rising and setting sun, or the waxing and waning moon, or the circling seasons, or the "eternal stars," which possess this power. Scenes and objects the most familiar possess the same. The

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mossy bank on which we sat years ago with a friend, conversing of events and objects in which we were mutually interested, has left a picture of itself in our souls, which all the cares of life have been unable to efface. The old hawthorn tree under which we played in childhood, though it has left no image of itself in the soil from which it has been long rooted up, has left an image in our souls. The simple melody we heard years ago from some wandering minstrel, on a cold and raw evening of winter in the streets of the great city, lives within us, and a very simple circumstance would call it up, and awaken echoes we suppose have died away. Of this power of the objects and scenes of the material world to imprint themselves on the mind, we have an interesting illustration furnished by Dr. Rush, of Philadelphia. "During the time," says he, "I passed at a country school in Cecil county, in Maryland, I often went on a holiday with my schoolmates to see an eagle's nest upon the summit of a dead tree in the neighbourhood of the school, during the time of the incubation of the bird. The daughter of the farmer in whose field the tree



stood, and with whom I became acquainted, married and settled in this city about forty years ago. In our occasional interviews, we now and then spoke of the innocent haunts and rural pleasures of our youth, and amongst other things of the eagle's nest in her father's field. A few years ago I was called to visit this woman, when she was in the lowest stage of typhus fever. Upon entering her room I caught her eye, and with a cheerful tone of voice said only, '*The Eagle's Nest.*' She seized my hands, without being able to speak, and discovered strong emotions of pleasure in her countenance, probably from a sudden association of all her early domestic connections and enjoyments with the words I had uttered. From that time she began to recover. She is now living, and seldom fails, when she meets me, to salute me with the echo of the '*Eagle's Nest.*' '' \*

The personal experience, however, of every one will furnish abundant instances of the deep impression which the objects of the material world


\* Rush's Lectures (Lect. 11)—On the Utility of a Knowledge of the Faculties of the Mind to a Physician.

have made on their minds. Do we not find how frequently scenes long forgotten recur to remembrance? We are sitting, it may be, over the winter fire, conversing with a friend on some topic of mutual interest. While the conversation is going on, some casual remark made by him touches a chord which has been long silent, and brings before us, with all the freshness and vividness of reality, some landscape on which we gazed in years long gone by, and which, during the interval, has not even once recurred to memory. Or, we are musing alone. The sound of the rising wind, as it struggles for an entrance through the casement—or wanders sad and lonely through the passages—or tries to force itself through a crevice—or wails amongst the trees—falls upon our ears, and suddenly there rises up to view some scene indissolubly associated with that sound, and which starts from its place of slumber as soon as we hear it. Thus deeply has the world without impressed itself on the world within. No influence which has come from it has ever been lost. Within each of our bosoms the treasures of thought and feeling derived from it lie in greater abun-

dance than any which nature has concealed either in the mines of the earth or the caves of the ocean. We may not be always conscious of their existence, and they may often seem to have disappeared; but they exist, mingled with our consciousness, as those particles of solid bodies which are invisible to the naked eye exist in a state of solution in water. A conflagration destroyed in a single night the records with which distant ages and numerous countries had contributed to enrich the great library of Alexandria. No such catastrophe can befall those records which have been written by the hand of God on our souls, through the medium of material symbols. They will exist when the scenes from which they have been derived have for ever passed away. Matter is perishable—ideas are eternal.

“A thing of beauty is a joy for ever.”

Our observations have hitherto been somewhat general. Let us descend to particulars, and inquire in what way the material world discharges the office we have assigned to it—that of a great institute, organized and maintained for the



development of our moral and intellectual nature. How does it accomplish this purpose?

I. First of all, the Material World developes Intellect, by furnishing it with objects which are ever arresting its attention, and prompting it to inquiry.

Without a world furnished with objects which should at one time awe us by their grandeur, at another charm us by their beauty, and at another overwhelm us by their magnitude, the intellect would have slumbered or remained in a great measure torpid. It would have fallen into that state of collapse into which bodies sink when placed in an exhausted receiver they are deprived of atmospheric pressure. Its curiosity would have been unexcited; its energies would have been untasked; its powers of reason, memory, judgment, and imagination would never have risen above the weakness and immaturity they reach in childhood. Intellectual progression would have been out of the question. We should have vegetated but could not have lived. Surrounded, however, as we are with objects which are perpetually arresting our attention—pheno-

mena which are ever prompting us to inquire into their proximate and final causes—physical laws, which are ever visiting us with their penalties when we infringe them, and bestowing their rewards when we obey them—the mind is stimulated to constant inquiry, and is furnished with a severe and wholesome discipline. It is never allowed to fall asleep. It is kept continually awake, and at its post. Arrested on all hands by phenomena which strike it at one time by their grandeur, and at another fascinate it by their beauty, it begins to inquire into their nature and their laws. Inquiry leads to analysis; analysis leads to generalization; generalization leads to hypothesis; and hypothesis ends in science, with its established principles and its unchangeable laws. It would be easy to furnish illustrations of the stimulus which the objects of the material world have given to the intellect, and how in this way it has been invigorated and enlarged. Take the single, or, more properly speaking, the compound element of light. That element has done more to stimulate mind than perhaps any other. It formed the subject of numerous experiments

to Sir Isaac Newton, who may be said to have laid, by his ingenious and beautiful hypothesis as to the nature and properties of light, the foundation of the science of optics, since so much enlarged by the discoveries of Laplace, Arago, and Sir David Brewster. It inspired, moreover, the mind of Milton with conceptions the most beautiful perhaps of any which occur in his great epic, when rolling in vain those sightless orbs, to which no more returned, as he tells us, day, or the sweet approach of even, or morn, or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose, or human face divine, but cloud instead, and everduring dark—he addressed to it the sublime apostrophe beginning—

“ Hail, holy light ! offspring of heaven, first-born  
Of the Eternal ! co-eternal Beam !  
May I express Thee unblamed ! Since God is light,  
And never but in unapproached light  
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,  
Bright effluence of bright Essence increate.”

What is true of light is true of every other object. The search after the philosopher's stone and an *elixir vitæ* stimulated, to an extent we can scarcely conceive, the intellect and whetted

the curiosity of the alchymists, who sat age after age, putting nature to every possible kind and degree of torture in their glowing furnaces.

II. The material world developes Emotion, by presenting scenes and objects which are ever calling it forth.

Our nature is emotional as well as intellectual, and material objects, while they stimulate the intellect into greater activity, and bring out its hidden powers, touch the springs of emotion, and cause them to send forth their streams, as the wand of the Hebrew lawgiver brought water from the rock. So true is this, that there is not a single object in the whole material world on which we can look, without experiencing moral emotion of one kind or another. Who can look on the setting sun, drenching the clouds which float around it in fire, or suffusing them with dyes richer than any which ever came from the looms of Tyre, without feeling how sublime is that spectacle, which but for its being so common, would call the whole world to gaze at it? Who can look on the midnight heavens, with their nightly revelations of beauty and grandeur, with-

out feeling an emotion of awe steal over his soul, and leading him to rapt and breathless devotion? Who can look on that ocean in which the Almighty's form "glasses itself in tempest," or listen to that diapason voice which has sounded from age to age, strong and clear as when it was first attuned by God, without feeling how frail and feeble he is compared with that element, which makes the mightiest armaments of man its playthings, and refuses to restore, until the day of doom, even one of the innumerable victims it has swept into and retains in its rocky prisons? Who can look on the thunder-cloud, moving in darkness and silence across the heavens, or listen to its stern, solemn music, without experiencing emotions of awe, which only disappear when its echoes have died away? In this way matter develops emotion, and without objects, such as those which surround us in the outward world, the emotional part of our nature would have remained unexercised, like the harp, which, no longer exposed to the breath of heaven, but hung idly up in the hall, ceases to pour forth its once rich and living symphonies.



III. The material world develops Will by presenting laws which must be obeyed, and difficulties which must be overcome.

Matter, while a good servant, is a bad master. It is intractable in the extreme, if it be not rightly handled. It has a humour of its own. It will not be crossed. It will yield to us on one condition, and that is, if we obey the laws which govern it. It will not however give us our own way. It will not obey us unless we obey it. Water will wait upon us most willingly, and furnish us with a power which will enable us almost to outstrip the thirty-two winds which Æolus holds in his bag, provided we give it the accommodation it requires; that we furnish it with a vessel of sufficient size and thickness, in which it may lie at its full length, or dilate itself, like the frog in the fable, to the extent of its capacity (if it so pleases); that we give it as much fire as it calls for to warm it when it grows benumbed, rheumatic or cold; that we give it the use of a safety-valve, so that, if it should happen to require for any purpose to go at large, it may be able to do so at a moment's notice; but if we will

not agree to these conditions, or, agreeing to them do not observe them, grudging it the space it requires to take exercise in; keeping back its food, and not giving it as much fire as it can eat; denying to it the use of the valve at which it may escape, and keeping it firm and fast with locked doors, like a school-boy who has played the truant—then this said gentle and peace-loving article of Water will become most rebellious, and the chances are, that flinging boiler, pieces of broken machinery, red-hot ashes, clouds of steam, lumps of coke, in our face, besides breaking into fragments a long line of carriages, and throwing their respective occupants into all kinds of places and positions—projecting some into a ditch, precipitating others down an embankment, placing others in the centre of a quickset hedge, or others on the top of a haystack, and besmearing and begriming all so plentifully with mire, that in their bruised and blackened condition, they will scarcely know each other—it will do these and other things, and ask us what right we have to treat it in so niggardly and inhospitable a manner.


It is the same with Electricity. It will be most submissive if we will take it and use it in the way it prescribes. If we do so, it will carry a letter for us in no time to the Great Mogul or the Khan of Tartary. If we happen to be sick, too, it will take up to London a statement of our complaint and symptoms, and brings us down, in the course of a brief period, a prescription from the most celebrated London physician. It will catch the thief who stole our gold watch or plundered our dwelling. It will overtake the swindler who drew on our account at the bank. It will do these and a hundred things more for us. It will girdle the earth in forty minutes. It will either stand or sit, wait or run, fall asleep or remain awake, speak or be silent, scream or roar, until we think "the sheeted dead do gibber in the streets." It will be as talkative as Dame Quickly, as humorous as Sir John Falstaff, or as sentimental as Sterne. It will lend us the eyes of Argus, the hands of Briareus, and the club of Hercules. All these things will it do on one, and one condition only, and that is, we obey the laws which regulate it. Disobey those laws in the slightest degree—do

not give it entirely its own way—let it out in too great a quantity, and it will turn round upon us like a very demon, and, tearing to pieces the galvanic battery where we formed it, or breaking into atoms the zinc plates from which we produce it, will throw them piecemeal in our face, and ask us what we mean by treating it in so rude and unbusiness-like a manner. And thus it is the power of Will is called into play. The choice is given to us, and we must make it. Matter will do any thing for us if we choose wisely, and in accordance with established laws; but if we will not, we must take the consequences, and find it as impracticable in our hands as the ass of Hudibras, or the bad-made pen to which the Highland proprietor traced at once his bad diction, bad grammar, and bad handwriting.

IV. The material world develops the Love of Beauty, by presenting objects which excite and nourish it.

The material world is one great storehouse of beauty. It is beautiful in calm and tempest—in sunshine and shade—in spring and autumn—summer and winter. Take one of its innume-

rable phases of beauty. What a beauty invests the landscape when veiled from sight by means of snow! Under that covering, whiter than the whitest Parian marble, matter itself seems to undergo a kind of transfiguration, and becomes regenerated. It seems to be sanctified. Now this prevalence of beauty throughout the material world develops that love of it which forms a part of our nature, and the development of which is amongst the best means of enlarging the intellect and sublimating taste. It was the love of the beautiful which made the Greeks, as a nation, so much higher in point of culture than their national contemporaries. Their blue skies, shady groves, silvery streams, sun-clad mountains, fed this taste; and hence the arts which gave expression to it, and in which they attained such unrivalled eminence—poetry, painting, and sculpture. As it is with the national, so with the individual mind. It is elevated and purified by the culture of the taste for beauty; and this taste the material world furnishes with rich and appropriate nutriment. Nature in all her moods is beautiful, and may be personified



by Venus, with her blue eyes and starry zone, or Milton's Proserpine gathering flowers, herself "a fairer flower."

V. The material world developes Faith, by perpetually calling it into exercise.

Nature constantly, and at every step demands "faith." "Canst thou believe?" is the first and last question she puts to those who would enjoy her immunities. She put this question to Columbus; and when he showed he believed her rather than man—that he put confidence in the intimations of the magnetic needle—that he could trust himself in her hands, even while crossing an unknown ocean—then nature rewarded his faith, by opening up to him a new and a mighty continent beyond the western wave. And it is the same still. Nature demands implicit faith. She requires this declaration of faith on the part of the husbandman, before she allows him to commit a single grain of seed to the ground; and unless he shows the faith that is required, he will have no harvest. It is the same with the merchant. When he proposes to send a vessel to a foreign clime to bring home gems, gold, spice,

or barbaric pearl, nature requires him to put faith in her, and until he do so, his vessel cannot leave the harbour. In all things nature requires faith. Eating, drinking, sleeping, are all acts of faith. When we eat, we eat in the faith that our food will nourish, and not poison us. When we walk, we walk in the faith that the law of gravitation will not let go its hold of us, in which case we would slide off into space, and that our muscles will not refuse to obey our will, in which case we would come to a dead standstill. And when we go to sleep, we exercise a faith greater even than that we display in any of those lesser acts. In the act of going to sleep, we resign our soul, with all its treasures of thought, feeling, experience, memory our bodies, with all their organs and senses—in one word, our whole being—to the keeping of nature, believing and trusting that she will restore it in better working order than that in which we gave it to her. And thus the material world affords perpetual discipline for faith, and requires from us at every step of belief as great as that which Christianity demands.

VI. The material world developes Religious

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Sentiment, by surrounding us on all sides with scenes and objects shrouded in the greatest mystery.

Nature veils her most familiar processes in mystery. While she is open and candid with us, she yet contrives to keep her own secrets. She keeps us at a respectful distance. She tell us, indeed, to look at her, to handle her, to put her if we will into the crucible, or torture her by a slow fire; but, while giving us permission to do these things, she resists and avenges every attempt to take from her face that dark and fire-proof veil under which she hides her features. Hence the mystery which envelopes all things—a mystery so great, that a grain of sand, a spark of fire, a drop of water, are as full of it as the universe at large. And why this mystery? Why this mist of darkness brooding over all things? To develope and nourish, amongst other things, that religious principle of our nature which is first called into action by a sense of the supernatural, which attains a greater stature and fulness amid the gloom of night, with her ebon throne, leaden sceptre, and train of stars, than amid the garish light of day; and



which, so far from being lessened, as science opens to us a wider horizon, and pours on us a purer light, grows even deeper and stronger amid that second and deeper darkness which is created and springs out of the very excess of light itself.

It will be within the scope of these remarks to refer for a single moment to the difference in point of depth and permanency made by the teaching of natural objects and that coming from books or spoken language. How different an impression is made upon the mind by *reading* the description of a snow-storm, such, for example, as that given by Thomson, from that which is made by *seeing* it; and how faint the picture conveyed by means of the most appropriate imagery derived from "ruffian winds," "driving clouds," and "arrowy sleet," compared with that which nature herself produces, when addressing us not by means of words, but by means of those symbols, which in her hands are spirit and life, she produces on the soul a picture which never wears out! We may forget, and generally do soon forget, the most highly-wrought poetic descriptions of such

a scene, but who that has witnessed the scene itself, on some dark night of winter, can ever forget it?—when the feathery flakes, descending in swift succession, blotted out the stars as completely as if they had vanished from the sky—diffused themselves so rapidly over houses, chimneys, public buildings, domes of churches, that they looked like so many icy petrifications, and drifted in such wild tempestuous eddies along the streets, that the lamps were all but blown out, and men and women, hurrying along with blanched cheeks and frozen locks, seemed so many white-robed apparitions. No written or spoken description of a scene of this kind can equal the reality. Nature teaches more by means of a few flakes of snow, a little wind, and a few dark snow-laden clouds, than Rubens could do with all the colours of art; or Milton with words tripping about him like so many “airy servitors.” There is no language like that which nature employs. The German say that “speech is silvern,” and “silence goldern.” The silence of nature surpasses the speech of man, and her

speech is inconceivably more expressive than any which we address to each other.

What a striking illustration of the truth of these remarks, and of the impression made upon the mind by material objects, is furnished by the revolution of the seasons! Each season leaves a hue peculiar to itself on the soul. Spring is the Preacher of Hope, and naturally inspires its warm and often deceitful visions. Seeing all nature rise with renewed vigour from the state of torpor in which it has been lying, the mind partakes of the exhilarating influence peculiar to the season, and shaking off feelings of despondency and gloom, rises into a purer and clearer element of gladness. Summer is the Preacher of Enjoyment. The bright skies and verdant fields inspire feelings of joy, and, as we look on the landscape covered with its richest tints, the waters reposing in unruffled beauty, and the heavens lit up with more than their usual effulgence, our spirits sympathise with the gladness which reigns around, and bound with a new and richer life. Autumn is the Preacher of Mingled Joy and

Sadness. The ripened fruits—the yellow fields—the barns filled with plenty, and the presses bursting with new wine—the valleys covered over with corn—the song of the reapers—the sounds of the harvest home—all have a tendency to inspire feelings of gratitude and gladness. Joy, however, is not the only feeling produced by this season. It is finely blended and tempered with one of sadness. An emotion of sadness rises up when we look on the woods hastening to decay—the fields stripped of their rich produce—the skies losing their tints of beauty and warmth—and the new-made graves, which this season, often so rife in disease, helps to dig. Winter is the Preacher of Reflection. This season awakens a class of thoughts and emotions in some respects different from those awakened by any of the others. Though not the season of hope, it awakens hope, by leading us to look forward to the time when the winter will be over and gone. Though not the season of joy, it brings with it joys peculiar to itself, and which receive intensity and zest from the rigour which reigns around.

Though not the season of sadness, it inspires sadness, by clothing every object around us in the drapery of woe. Winter, in one word, combines into one compound and distinctive feeling the feelings produced by each of the other seasons. It calls into exercise at one and the same time hope, joy, and sadness. It is more particularly however the season of reflection, and we are called upon then to reflect on our condition, character, and prospects, as we are never required to do at any other time. God withdraws from us every sight which may charm the eye by its luxuriance, and every sound which may regale the ear by its melody, that we may look within. He makes the sky above us dark, that we may look for light in some other quarter. He makes the earth barren, that we may look for fertility elsewhere. He makes every sound which comes to us at this season—the sound of the creaking woods, the moaning sea, the wailing wind, the rustling leaves, the flocks and herds fleeing with piteous cry from the pelting storm—He makes them all plaintive, that we may look for a

sweeter minstrelsy and richer music in our own souls.

The teaching of material objects, it may be remarked, is of a kind which is in every instance deeply solemn. There is nothing light or frivolous about nature in any of her moods. She never attempts simply to make us laugh, or amuse us. Instruction is her great object—the building up of the soul in wisdom and virtue. Milton's "Il Penseroso," rather than his "L'Allegro," would represent her. Her brightest scenes have always a tincture of sadness about them. The clouds move solemnly across the heavens, and are as often edged with black as silver. The woods, even when covered with their richest foliage, and ringing with their sweetest melody, awaken a feeling of sadness, by reminding us of the evanescence of the vernal glories. And what a solemnity belongs to all the *sounds* which come from the material world! All, without exception, are more or less fitted to create a feeling of pensive sadness. Listen to the sound which comes from a forest of pines, swinging to and fro on the mountain side, in the dark gusty night, and say

if this be not their true character. Or listen to the sound of music mellowed by water—

“ That strain again—it had a dying fall—  
O, it came o’er my ear like the sweet south  
That breathes upon a bank of violets,  
Stealing and giving odour ”

Or listen to the sound of the sea, heard on some dark stormy night. It has been called, from the feeling of sadness it inspires, the “melancholy main.” The same character belongs more or less to nearly all other sounds. What more fitted to create deep, pensive emotion, than the wind heard rising at the dead of night, seeking, like a spirit, to force its way through opposing crevices, and moaning and wailing as if it sought rest, but could find none?

“ This life of ours, like an Eolian harp hath many a joyous strain,  
But along with it all there runs a sound as of souls in pain ”

Such is, then, the material world, with a few of its more palpable uses, and the relation it bears to life. It is, as we have seen, intended to serve the purpose, not of a gaudy and useless show-room, hung with rich tapestry and objects of art, and on which are labelled the words, “Touch not, taste not, handle not.” It is not

intended even to serve the purpose of a Picture Gallery, along whose spacious corridors we may wander at pleasure, gratifying our taste with the faultless models which hang on its flaming walls. More than all these it is intended to be a School in which we are placed to learn—where lessons of wisdom, virtue, and truth are taught us, such as were never taught in the schools at Rome ; and where teachers, more numerous, venerable, and successful than any who walked with brow severe and flowing robe along the banks of the Ilissus or the Tiber, wait upon us every hour. In this great school all things are our teachers, if we have but ears to hear. Not only the great lights of heaven—not only day to day utters speech, and night to night teaches knowledge—not only the seasons deliver to us, as they come round, each its duly appointed and solemn homily—not only every form of life, from the zoophyte, mysteriously blending in its nature the animal and the vegetable, to the megatherium, which could tear up gigantic trees by the roots, and whose fossilized bones are found in the formations of a distant age—not only the metals, which, when heated to a state of incandescence,



put on the form and features of vegetable life—not only the vegetable, which in some of its forms and functions mimics the animal—not only the various kinds of minerals, whether in the form of the salts soluble, and disappearing in water, or granite resisting the action of the ages and fire—not only every kind of ore, from the iron which flows in minute particles in our own blood, to the gold which binds in radiant circlets pearls on the brows of kings—but all things above, within, around, preach to us in tones the gentlest and most persuasive, and address to us a discourse the most sacred and instructive, so that, in the words of that sweet singer of a past age, we may say:—

“ For us the winds do blow,  
The earth doth rest, heaven moves, and fountains flow.  
Nothing we see but means our good—  
As our delight, or as our treasure.  
The whole is either our cupboard of food,  
Or cabinet of pleasure.

“ The stars have us to bed ;  
Night draws the curtain  
Which the sun withdraws ;  
Music and light attend our tread ;  
All things to our flesh are kind  
In their descent, and being, to our minds  
In their ascent and cause.”

GEORGE HERBERT.

## [ XII. ]

### THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

"O close with reverent care these eyes—  
Their meek and sorrowing light hath fled;  
No trembling gleam, through mists of tears,  
From those dimm'd orbs will more be shed.

"Draw down the thin and azure lid;  
No look of mute appealing pain,  
No piercing anguish'd gaze on Heaven  
Will strike through those blue depths again "

FAMILIAR as we are with the spectacle, there is none on earth more solemn than that of a burial. The burial of a little child who has just opened its eyes on the world and closed them for ever—of a mother, whose sun has gone down while it is yet noon, and who is followed to the grave by her weeping children—of a pastor, over whom devout men make lamentation, and whose ashes are committed to their last resting-place, under the shadow of the sacred edifice in which he preached the everlasting gospel—of a monarch,

whose coffin, with its crimson pall, and richly chased ornaments, is deposited in the vault where a long line of ancestors repose, amid the light of torches, the floating of banners, and the muffled sounds of mournful music—each and all of these are deeply solemn scenes. There is one, however, more solemn still, and which concentrates within itself elements of novelty, interest, and grandeur, greater than those which are to be found connected with all the funeral rites which have ever been performed. That scene is the burial of Christ; and though it is destitute of those outward circumstances of pomp and pageantry with which such scenes are usually surrounded, yet its very simplicity throws around it an air of surpassing grandeur, and if we attentively consider it, we shall see that it is the most momentous event which has occurred in the history of the world, and compared with which the burial of all the monarchs, heroes, statesmen, and philosophers, who have ever lived, are events of mimic grandeur and mock majesty.

The first circumstance deserving our notice in connection with the burial of Christ is, that it

took place *in a spot which had been marked out by prophecy ages before as the scene of His interment.* To this place there is a reference in the words, “He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death,” or as it has been more correctly rendered by Lowth, “though His grave should be with the wicked, yet, with the rich, should be His tomb ;” and so precisely was this prophecy fulfilled, that while the bodies of His fellow sufferers were consigned to an obscure and ignominious grave on the brow of the hill on which they were crucified, and which, from the relics of mortality with which it was strewn, received the name of Golgotha, or the place of skulls, the body of Christ, by a particular interposition of providence, was exempted from this fate, and buried in the exact spot which prophecy had pointed out as the scene of His interment. Hence, it is mentioned by the sacred historian, “There came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus’ disciple. He went to Pilate and begged the body of Jesus, and he laid it in his own new tomb which he had hewn out in the rock ;” and thus the announce-


ment, that while Christ should make his grave with the wicked, yet with the rich should be His tomb, was distinctly and literally fulfilled.

Another circumstance deserving of notice is, that Christ was buried in a manner the most *unostentatious*, and such as strikingly harmonized with the simplicity of His character and the object of his life. As His life had not only been free from the slightest appearance of parade, but distinguished by a simplicity, even surpassing that attained by the greatest of the prophets (not excepting even Elijah himself, clothed in his garment of camel's hair, and holding communion with the Divine Being, amid the rocky solitudes of Judæa), so in like manner it was ordered that his burial should be distinguished by the same simplicity, and that He should be buried in a manner that should stand out in striking contrast with that in which the men of this world are buried, and some of whom descend to the tomb amid the sounds of muffled music, the floating of banners, the light of torches, and the wail of hired mourners. Hence, in the brief account which has been left us

of this burial, we find it stated in Mark xv., 46th verse, that it was conducted with the greatest possible simplicity. How simple a burial was this! and how strikingly it stands out in contrast with that of Jacob, who was followed to the tomb by thousands of mourners rending the air with their cries; with that of Josiah, who was buried amid such pomp and splendour in the valley of Hadradimmon, that it is said "all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him," and singing men and singing women blended their voices, as they moved slowly along in the solemn death chant; with that of Stephen, over whom devout men made lamentation when they carried him forth, with his countenance beaming with celestial rapture, and his hands clasped in the attitude of prayer. Compared with each of these burials, how simple was that of the Saviour! So simple was it, that instead of being followed to the tomb, as was common in the East, by a long and mercenary train of mourners, He was followed only by Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, the two Marys, and the mother of Zebedee's children. So simple was it that instead of being wrapt in a

richly-embroidered shroud, He was wrapt only in a sheet of fine linen; and, instead of being placed in the grave amid the mournful sounds of the funeral dirge, the only dirge sang for Him was that breathed by the winds, or murmured by the waters, as they swept amongst the trees of the garden in which He was committed to the tomb.

Nor in an enumeration of the circumstances connected with the Burial of Christ, must we forget to name that He *was buried at a time* strikingly fitted to impart additional interest and solemnity to the scene. The time of Christ's burial is referred to in the 27th chapter of Matthew, at the 57th verse, and by looking at that passage we shall find it was either a little before, or a short time after, the hour of sunset. "When the evening," says the sacred historian, "was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea." As the hour of sunset in eastern countries is often one of transcendent splendour and beauty, it will be seen that the scene must have been peculiarly solemn, occurring, as it did, at a time when the sun was gilding with




its radiance, the pinnacles of the temple, as well as the mountains, valleys, and streams around Jerusalem, and even tinging with its lustre the bier on which the Saviour was borne to His tomb. Occurring, as the burial of Christ did, at this hour, it must have been peculiarly solemn, and whether designed or undesigned, the coincidence is striking, and suggests the thought that while the natural sun was withdrawing its cheerful beams, the Sun of Righteousness also—He who is the light of the world—was passing through a darker and more dreadful eclipse.

That circumstance, however, which made the burial of Christ differ from every other, is that it occurred *amid prodigies the most numerous and striking*, and such as distinguished it from the burial of every other human being, however remarkable for his wisdom, piety, or virtue, who ever lived. We read of the burial of kings, but though we find that when they were committed to the grave, they were committed amid those marks of sorrow and respect due to their exalted rank, we observe at the same time that nature maintained a stubborn silence, and



refused to give the slightest attestation to their death. We read of the burial of heroes, but though when they were laid in the grave hastily dug in the battle-field, they were buried amid the roar of cannon, and the muffled sounds of martial music, and the tears of an affectionate soldiery, we find also that nature maintained the same expressive silence, and refused to take the slightest notice of the fact of their departure. We read of the burial of philanthropists, but though we find that they were buried amid the wail of widows, the tears of orphans, and the sighs of prisoners whose chains they had broken, we find also that nature pursued her course as usual. We read of the burial of men, the most distinguished in all countries. We never read, however, of one at whose burial nature paid the slightest pause, but on the contrary, we find that when they were committed to the tomb, she pursued her wonted course, and was as disdainful and regardless of them, as if the most ordinary spirit had passed from the earth. It was entirely different, however, when Christ was buried, and if we consider the prodigies by which



it was preceded and accompanied, we shall see that they distinguish it from every other, as well as proclaim Him to be the Son of God, with power. To these prodigies there is reference in the 27th chapter of Matthew and the 50th verse. What prodigies were these? The veil which had hung in the Temple from age to age, and concealed from human view the Holy of Holies, was rent asunder, as if to intimate that by the rending of the veil of Christ's humanity, there was access to the Holiest of all. The earth quaked, intimating that nature was moved to its very centre by the awful tragedy which was then being enacted. The rocks gave way, intimating that though the hearts of men were not moved by the appalling spectacle, their rugged forms at least would yield. The sun hid himself, intimating that it was only fit he should veil his face when the Sun of Righteousness was in the shadows of a deep eclipse. By these, and by other prodigies, the burial of Christ was distinguished, and they were considered so appalling and significant, that a heathen sage who lived at some distance from the scene of the crucifixion,

when he beheld the increasing darkness, exclaimed, "Surely, either the God of nature is suffering, or nature herself is going to destruction."

But let us now consider some of those reasons which rendered it necessary that the Saviour should submit to a doom so ignominious and degrading.


One reason which rendered the burial of Christ necessary, was, that it was required to *complete His voluntary humiliation on account of sin.*

Before sin could be pardoned, it was necessary that He, who had undertaken to become the substitute of sinners, should descend to the lowest point of humiliation to which it was possible to descend. So necessary was it that this point should be reached, that in all probability, had the humiliation of Christ terminated on the Cross instead of extending to the tomb, the Justice of God would have expressed itself in articulate and audible accents as not satisfied, and the horrors of the hour and scene would have been still further increased by the display,

not only of its avenging fires, but by the utterance of some such voice as this,—“ My claims are not yet satisfied ; the blood that has been shed does not satisfy them—the pains that have been endured do not satisfy them—the obedience that has been rendered does not satisfy them,—they will only be satisfied when the Substitute of the sinner has descended to the lowest possible point of humiliation, and only when that point is reached, this sword will be sheathed and these fires be extinguished.” If these remarks are just, it is obvious that before Christ could complete His humiliation on account of sin, it was necessary He should submit to the ignominy of burial. Had He not been buried, that humiliation would have been incomplete. It was not enough that He humbled himself so far as to take upon Him our nature, consented to be born in a manger, scourged by Pilate, mocked by Herod, and spat upon by the soldiers,—it was not enough that He lay prostrate in the garden, bathed in a sweat of blood, allowed a crown of thorns to be placed upon His head, and a reed in His hand, and bore the cross until, exhausted with its

weight, He sank beneath the load ; it was not enough that He ascended the cross, bowed His head, and gave up the ghost ; it was necessary that He should humble himself still further, by being wrapped in a winding sheet, placed on a bier, and consigned to the darkness of the tomb ; and had not this last and lowest act of humiliation been accomplished, sin would not have been pardoned, Divine Justice would not have been satisfied, the Law would not have been magnified, and the sinner could not have been saved.

It was necessary still further that Christ should be buried, that *He might rise again from the dead*, and demonstrate by His doing so that He possessed power of subduing death himself in his own territories. The burial of Christ was a necessary step towards His resurrection, and while His resurrection was designed to be a standing monument of the validity of His claims to be the Messiah, that resurrection was designed also to furnish incontestable proof that Christ would in due time gain a decisive and everlasting triumph over death itself. During His life He gave many proofs of His possessing the



power of destroying death. He gave a proof of His possessing this power, in the case of Lazarus, when by a single word He said, "Lazarus come forth," and the absent spirit returned to its tenement. He gave a proof of His possessing this power in the case of the son of the widow of Nain, who though stretched on his bier, and on his way to the grave, was restored to life by His simply saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, &c." He gave a proof of His possessing this power in the case of the saints, many of whom, we are told, left their graves, and entered the Holy City. Decisive, however, as were these proofs that Christ possessed the power of subduing death, these proofs would not have been so convincing had not Christ himself submitted to the stroke of death, and by entering the house of the strong man armed, stripped him of his armour, and spoiled him of his goods. That proof, however, was furnished when Christ rose from the dead; and when we consider that he rose in spite of every effort which was made to retain Him in the grave, we shall see that the proof is the strongest we could have had, and in

the language of Paley, that it would be a greater miracle if that proof were false than the fact it supports was true. To see the force of this remark let us consider the means which were employed to detain Him in the grave. To detain Him there, the Chief Priests and Pharisees appointed a watch to guard his tomb, so that by no possibility he should escape. To detain Him there, the stone placed at the door of the sepulchre, too, had a public seal attached to it. To detain Him there, every effort was made which ingenuity could devise, or malice suggest. Notwithstanding the precautionary measures, however, the bands of death could not hold Him, and with an ease infinitely greater than that with which Samson burst asunder the withs with which he was bound by the Philistines, Christ burst the chains of His prison and ascended up on high. To the burial of Christ we are indebted for this proof. His burial furnishes incontestable evidence that He grappled successfully with death in his own dominions, and that in due time there will be left no more traces of his power than are left vestiges of some of those gigantic monsters that


swam the deep, or prowled in the forests of the earth when it was young.

There was still another purpose to be served by the burial of Christ, and that was, that He might *disarm the grave of its terrors*, and enable His people to look forward to it with composure. That the grave is a place of terror is what we all more or less feel. Not only is it so to the man of the world, who shudders at the prospect of having to exchange the bustling market-place for the noiseless tomb—not only is it so to the man of pleasure, who startles at the thought of having to exchange the festive chamber, with its sparkling lights and enchanting music, for the chamber of corruption ; but it is so to the Christian himself, who, notwithstanding every effort to reconcile his mind to the stern and inexorable law of dissolution, shrinks at the solemn prospect. It is true, that some men on the verge of dissolution, have displayed a courage which would almost lead us to suppose they had overcome the fear of death. We have heard of an infidel philosopher of our own country boasting how calmly he could die. The fortitude of such

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men, however, was assumed for the occasion ; they overacted their part, and in trying to play the hero played the buffoon. These cases, moreover, are the exceptions, and not the rule ; and that rule is, that through the fear of death, not only the great majority of mankind, but even the Christian himself, is often kept in bondage. One great reason, therefore, why Christ submitted to enter the grave, was, that He might strip it of its terrors ; and knowing, as he did, that nothing would contribute so much to this end as the fact that He had Himself gone into it, and come out from it unscathed, He resolved to do so, and in this way pass through the ordeal we all so much dread ; and not only so, but, though He knew he should shortly leave it, allowed himself to be wrapt in the winding sheet, and stretched out in the tomb. This was one of the purposes which Christ had in view in submitting to be buried. To this purpose there is a reference in the words, "That through death he might deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," and the best commentary on the truth of these words is the fact that multi-



tudes by means of a living faith, and an habitual contemplation of the burial of Christ, have learnt to look forward to their own with confidence and hope, and even ordered to be engraved on their tombstones, "Waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body."

To see how true this is, enter with us the chamber of a dying Christian. That Christian is a minister of the Gospel, and that minister of the Gospel is James Harvey, author of "Meditations among the Tombs." The chamber in which he lies is hard by the village church, where he preached the everlasting Gospel, and the silvery chime of the evening bell, calling the scattered flock to prayer, falls at distant intervals on his ear. He is worn with sickness, and wasted with pain, and the light of the setting sun falls on the face that will soon be hidden from human sight. In circumstances so trying, is he afraid? Is he appalled by the prospect of dissolution? "I have but a few minutes to live," said he, "but let me spend them in adoring our Great Redeemer. O Welcome, Welcome Death! How

thankful am I for death, the passage through which I go to the Lord and giver of Life."

All of us have the prospect of being sooner or later carried forth to burial. We shall be buried in different places. Some of us may be buried in the village churchyard, where the ashes of our fathers repose : some of us in the mighty ocean, some in the crowded city, and some in the forests, mountains, or valleys of a far-off land. We shall be buried too at different times ; some of us will be buried in youth, and some in manhood, and some in declining years. We shall be buried also in very different circumstances ; some of us will be buried by friends we love, and who, as they stand around our grave, and lower our coffin, shall drop the tear and heave the sigh of affection : some of us will be buried by strangers, who, without one emotion of love or of sorrow, shall hurry through the last sad offices ; and it may fall to the lot of some of us to be buried by those with whom we not only had no intercourse during life, but who were our open and inveterate foes. All these features of variety may distin-

guish our burial. One fact, however, is certain, that awaits us all. That we may be prepared therefore for this last and solemn event, let us think much of Him who was buried for our sakes. Let us remember that if He, the purest Being who ever trod this earth, submitted to the stroke of dissolution, it much more becomes us to submit to it, that as the grave could not hold him, neither shall it hold us, and that if we believe in Him, the shroud shall be converted into a bridal robe, and the grave into a chamber, where we retire for a while to put off the polluted garments of the flesh, and put on those prepared for the sanctified spirit.

We have spoken of the burial of the body. In the case of the impenitent, there will be a burial of the spirit. Is it asked where it will be buried? In the blackness of darkness. Is it asked who will bury it? He who buried Moses where no man could find him. Is it asked when? On the last great day. We know little, and it is well we know little, regarding this event. We know this, however, that were even the heavens above us to be covered with sackcloth, and the earth

with mourning, the sun to be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, the winds to breathe their most plaintive notes, and the ocean to lift up its voice in agony, with the view of impressing our minds with the dread and grandeur of the event, they could not do it. We can form to ourselves a definite conception of the burial of the body. We can picture it mouldering away in the grave, or lying peacefully on the rocky floor of the ocean. All our efforts, however, to conceive what is meant by the burial of the spirit are in vain. We know, however, that in the case of the hopelessly impenitent, it will be buried in an abyss of guilt, wretchedness, remorse, despair, from which it never will or can have a resurrection. To escape this doom, let us commend our spirits to the care of Him who was dead and is alive again ; and then the day of death will become to each of us the birthday of eternity, and the grave a temporary resting-place.

THE END.

## APPENDIX.

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(NOTE A.)—Well does Barrow say on this subject, “Virtue is not a mushroom that groweth up of itself in a night, when we are asleep, or, regard it not; but a delicate plant that groweth slowly and tenderly, needing much pains to cultivate it, much care to guard it, much time to mature it. Neither is Vice a spirit that will be conjured away with a charm; slain by a single blow, or despatched by one stab. Who, then, will be so foolish as to leave the eradicating of vice, and the planting in of virtue into its place, to a few years or weeks? Yet, he who procrastinates his repentance and amendment, grossly does so; with his eyes open he abridges the time allotted for the *longest and most important work* he has to perform; he is a fool.”

(NOTE B.)—Milton at the beginning of his immortal poem owns his dependence on divine influence, for the carrying out to a successful issue the work he had begun.

“And chiefly, thou, O! Spirit, that dost prefer,  
Before all temples, the upright heart and pure,  
Instruct me, for Thou knows't; what in me is dark  
Illumine, what is low raise and support.”

“No man,” says Tully, “was ever truly great without Divine Influence.” Socrates stated to his judges that it was owing to his having been attended by an invisible spirit, or divinely-appointed Monitor, that he had been prevented

from falling into vice, while Seneca gives it to be his conviction that no progress can be made in virtue without Divine influence. "Are you surprised that man should approach to the Gods? It is God that comes to men, nay, which is yet more—*He enters into them*, for no mind becomes virtuous *but by His assistance*."

(NOTE C.)—In his *Good Thoughts in worse times*, Fuller, speaking of Ejaculatory Prayer, says, "The field wherein bees feed, is no whit the barer for their biting. When they have taken their full repast on flowers or grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fat, on their reversions. The reason is because those little chemists, distil only the refined part of the flower. So ejaculations, bind not men to a bodily observance, only busy the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment. "Of the truth of this remark, an illustration occurs in the Life of Lord Ashley, who, before charging at the head of his regiment, at the Battle of Edge-Hill, uttered this short ejaculation—'Oh Lord, Thou knowest how busy I must be this day; if I forget Thee, do Thou not forget me.'"

(NOTE D.)—No portion of the works of that greatest of sages, and most practical of Philosophers—Dr. Samuel Johnson—will better repay a frequent perusal than that in which there is a record of his devotional exercises. These were frequent and fervent, enforcing in this way by example his own words—

"Pour forth thy fervours for a healthful mind,  
Obedient passions, and a will resigned;  
For faith, that panting for a happier seat,  
Counts death kind nature's signal for retreat."

(NOTE E.)

"All that tread  
The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
That slumber in its bosom."

W. C. BRYANT.

(NOTE F.)—"None can comprehend Eternity, but the eternal God. It is an ocean, whereof we shall never see the

shore, it is a deep, where we can find no bottom, a labyrinth from whence we cannot extricate ourselves, and where we shall ever lose the door."

BOSTON.

(NOTE G.)—"The setting of a great hope is like the setting of the sun. The brightness of our life is gone, shadows of the evening fall around us, and the world seems but a dim reflection itself—a broad shadow. We look forward into the coming lonely night, the soul withdraws itself. Then stars arise and the night is holy."

LONGFELLOW.

(NOTE H.)—"Does this soul within me, this spirit of thought, and love, and infinite desire dissolve as well as the body? Has nature, who quenches our bodily thirst, who rests our weariness, and perpetually encourages us to endeavour upwards, prepared no food for this appetite of immortality?"

LEIGH HUNT.

"Still seems it strange, that thou should'st live for ever,  
Is it less strange that thou should'st live at all?  
This is a miracle; and that no more."

YOUNG.

(NOTE I.)—"It is as natural to die as to be born, and to a little child, perhaps, the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit, is like one that is wounded in hot blood, and therefore, a mind *fixed and bent on somewhat that is good* doth avert the dolours of death."

LORD BACON.

When Schiller was asked when dying how he felt, he replied, "Calmer and calmer. A marvellous serenity and clearness of perception, are not unfrequently evinced before death, because nervous irritability is then exhausted."

"And 's this death?  
If such thy visiting,  
How beautiful thou art."

DR. MOORE.

(NOTE K.)—This argument is forcibly illustrated, both by Foster and Chalmers, and was, I believe, first used by the former of these distinguished men.



(NOTE I.)—"It was among the loveliest customs of the ancients to bury the young at morning twilight, for, as they strove to give the softest interpretation to death, so they imagined that Aurora, who loved the young, had stolen them to her embrace."

Ephemera die all at sunset, and no insect of this class has ever sported in the beams of the morning sun. Happier are ye, ye little human Ephemera, ye played only in the ascending beams, and in the early dawn, and in the eastern light. Ye drank only of the prelibations of life, hovered for a little while over a world of freshness and blossoms, and fell asleep in innocence before yet the morning dew was exhaled.

JEAN PAUL RICHTER.

(NOTE M.)—Attempts have been frequently made to discover an *elixir vitæ*, or tincture, by which the human body might be preserved in a state of immortal youth. These, however, have failed, as completely as the effort to discover that other tincture which the alchemists sought after, and by means of which they hoped to be able to transmute the imperfect metals into gold. Paracelsus, Basil, Valentine, and several other men of learning and celebrity, devoted much of their time and attention to a search after an *elixir vitæ*, wrote at great length upon this subject, and died believing that nature contained it in her inexhaustible stores of fragrant herbs and potent minerals.

(NOTE N.)—There are various opinions as to the nature and cause of the "*Sweat of Blood*." Though some understand by the expression, drops of perspiration, as large as drops of blood, it is evident that this is not the meaning of the Evangelist, and that the words must be understood literally. Medical writers mention cases of individuals, who, in consequence of extreme weakness of body, or distress of mind, have presented the strange spectacle of the perspiration that broke through the skin, being tinged with blood. It is mentioned of Baxter, the author of the "*Saint's Everlasting Rest*," that the blood frequently oozed through his skin, in consequence of his excessive weakness and the vehemence with which he preached. Bishop Pearce relates the case of an

Italian gentleman, who was so overwhelmed by the prospect of immediate death, that a bloody sweat broke over him ; while Mead, quoting the celebrated ancient physician, Galen, says, "Cases sometimes happen in which through mental pressure the pores may be so dilated, that blood may issue from them." It is evident, however, that none of these causes sufficiently account for the bloody sweat of Christ, in the open air, at an advanced hour of the night, and at a season of the year when the temperature of the atmosphere—even in a country like Palestine—was greatly reduced. For, first of all, so far from suffering from bodily weakness, he was in the vigour of manhood, and shewed he was so by crying on the cross with a *loud voice*, \* "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken me." Then secondly, that he was not under the influence of fear of death, terror, or any mental emotion which could produce this effect is evident from the majestic composure he shewed, not only in the garden when he was apprehended by the traitor and his band, but from his even noticing on the cross his mother standing amongst the crowd, and commending her to the care of the beloved disciple. What then, may it be asked, was the cause of it ? In a few short, but graphic words, the Evangelist states what that cause was, "being in *an agony*," he prayed more earnestly, and sweat as it were great drops of blood, falling on the ground.† The word agony signifies the utmost possible anguish and grief of soul, an agony produced in His case by His being called to bear the curse of the Divine Law, and to endure the withdrawal of a sense of the Divine favor and support. Dr. Lightfoot supposes that in addition to this, He had to endure in the garden a conflict with *Satan* in some terrible bodily shape, that as *Satan* assailed the first Adam in a visible and tangible form, there is reason to suppose he would in the same manner assail the Second, and quotes in support of this view the passage, "When the Devil had finished all his temptations he departed from him *for a season*," undoubtedly understanding by the word "*season*," the time of his last and greatest extremity.

(NOTE O).—"The cross was made of two beams either cross-

\* Matthew, 26, 37.

† Matthew, 27, 46.

ing at the top at right angles like a T, or in the middle of their length like an X. There was besides a piece of wood which projected from the middle, on which the person sat as on a kind of saddle, and by which the body was supported. The cross on which our Lord suffered was of the former kind, being thus represented in all old monuments, coins, and crosses. As the hands and feet are the great instruments of motion, these are provided with a greater quantity of *nerves*, and the nerves in these places, especially in the hands, are peculiarly sensitive. Now, wounds in these parts must be exceedingly painful, especially when inflicted with such instruments as large nails, forced through the places by the violence of a hammer, thus tearing asunder the fibrillæ, delicate tendons, and small bones of these parts."

(NOTE P.)—"The laws which govern physical nature are analagous to those which the Gospel introduces into the spiritual world. The earth is held to the sun *by the power of attraction*, and performs regularly its circuit around the central sustaining luminary. But the moral system on earth is a chaos of derangement. The attraction of *affection* which holds the soul to God has been broken, and the soul of man actuated by selfishness, and revolving on its own centre only, jars in its course with its fellow spirits. Into the midst of this chaos of disordered spirits, God, the sun of the spiritual world, came down."—*Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.*



1. The first part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".

2. The second part of the document is a list of names and titles, including "The Hon. Mr. Justice" and "The Hon. Mr. Justice".



